

THE
Peoples Right

To Read the
Holy Scripture

ASSERTED.

IN ANSWER to the 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, and 10th
Chapters, of the Second Part of the
POPISH REPRESENTER.

Nicholas Stratford, Ep. of Chester



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Hen. Maurice, *R^{mo} in Christo*
P. D. Wilhelmo Archiepiscop.
Cant. a Sacris.

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THough it is as evident, as that the Scripture is in Print, that the free Use of it, is by the Roman Clergy denied to the *Vulgar*; yet when they are charged with it by *Protestants*, they either take the confidence plainly to deny it; or if they own the Charge (as the Representers doth) they endeavour to put such glosses upon it, as to make their *denial* of the Scripture, to be in effect, but a better way of *granting* it: For since it is not the *words* of the Bible, but the *sense* and *meaning* of the words, that is properly the *Word of God*; while they withhold from them the *Letter*, they provide means to acquaint them with the *Scripture*, or the *true sense* of Scripture; and so deliver it to them with much more advantage, than People of any other *Perswasion* have it.

What others have formerly written for their Vindication in this Matter, it is needless now to examine; since it is not to be supposed, but that the *Representer* hath said as much to the purpose, as any of those who have gone before him. I shall therefore confine the ensuing Discourse, to what he hath said in his *6th*, *7th*, *8th*, *9th*, and *10th* Chapters. And that it may be the more clear and satisfactory, I shall shew these four Things.

B

I. What

- I. *What is the Practice of the Church of Rome in this Matter.*
- II. *That this Practice is plainly contrary to the Will of God, to the Reason of the Thing, and to the Practice of the Christian Church, for more than a thousand Tears after Christ.*
- III. *The insufficiency of those Reasons, by which the Representor endeavours to justify it.*
- IV. *Vindicate those Inferences the Protestants draw from it.*

All that is said by the *Representor*, may, I think, be reduced to one or other of these Heads.

C H A P. I.

* Chap. 6. p. 45.
46. Chap. 7. p.
52. Chap. 9.
p. 57.

THough some may think it needless to insist upon the first of these, since what the *Protestants* charge the Church of Rome with in this Matter, is freely enough owned by the *Representor* himself *; yet because some of that Communion here in *England*, (who for *prudential* Reasons, are not so straitly tied up) do confidently deny it; it may not be amiss, for their information, to give some short account of it, from better Authority than that of the *Representor*.

For which we need go no further than the fourth Rule of the *Trent* Expurgatory Index, which is this: *Since it is manifest by experience, that if the Holy Bible be promiscuously permitted in the vulgar Tongue, by reason of the rashness of Men, more Loss than Profit will thence arise: In this Matter, let the Judgment of the Bishop or Inquisitor*

Inquisitor be stood to, that with the advice of the Parish Priest or Confessor, they may grant the reading of the Bible in the vulgar Tongue, translated by Catholick Authors, to such as they shall understand can receive no hurt by such reading, but increase of Faith and Piety. Which Faculty let them have in writing. But be, that without such Faculty, shall presume to read, or to have the Bible, he may not receive Absolution of his Sins, except he first deliver up his Bible to the Ordinary.

If any Man shall say, That this Rule hath not the force of a Law, Monsieur de Maire, Counsellor, Almoner and Preacher to the King of France, in a Book published by Authority, shall give him an Answer: This Rule, saith he, is founded in Ecclesiastical Right, and no Man can transgress it, without contradicting that Obedience which he owes to the Church, and the Holy See, from which it hath received its Confirmation: Forasmuch as this Rule was not made but in prosecution of the Decree of the Council of Trent, &c. no Man can deny, but that it hath been approved by the Holy See, and authorized by the Bulls of Pius IV, and Clement VIII; who after they had view'd and diligently examin'd it, publish'd it to the World, with Order that it should be obey'd. (b)

If, says he, there be any thing that can hinder this Rule from having the Force of a Law, it must be either because it hath not been published, or being published, hath not been received: but neither the one nor the other can be said, since it is evident, that this is the old Quarrel we have with our Hereticks; that this is that which our Church hath always been upbraided with by the Enemies of the Faith; this is that which is the Subject of their most outrageous Calumnies; this is that which hath been acknowledged by

(b) Enfin je maintiens que cette Regle est fondée en droit Ecclesiastique, et qu'on ne la peut violer sans chercher l'obéissance qu'on doit à l'Eglise, &c. Le Sanctuaire ferme aux Profanes, part. 3. c. 1. p. 335, 336.

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wise Men ; that which hath been earnestly maintained by all the Defenders of Catholick Truths,

(c) — Ce que personne n' ignore ; ce que tout le monde publie, n' y aiant point de creance plus commune, ny plus generale parmy les fideles, &c. *Ibid.*

(c) that which no Person is ignorant of ; that which the whole World publishes ; there being no Point of Belief more common, nor more general among

the Faithful, than this of the Prohibition to read the Bible without permission. And this Belief so common, is (says he) a certain Proof, not only of the publication, but of the reception of this Rule.

It cannot be denied, but that it hath been received by all those Nations, by which the Decrees of Trent were universally received : And so they were, as Pallavicino tells us (d) in Italy, Spain, Sicily, Portugal, Poland, the greater part of Germany, and many other Countries.

(d) Pallav.
l. 24. c. 9, 11,
12, 13.

But suppose this Rule were not received as imposed by the Council of Trent, yet in all Popish Countries they have made it a Law to themselves. It is not indeed observed in France, upon the Authority of the Council ; but they have set it up, and established it as a Law by their own Authority, as is manifest by the Mandates of their Archbishops and Bishops, the Decrees of their Provincial Councils, and the Edicts and Arrests of their Kings and Parliaments (e).

(e) La Bible Deffendue au Vulgaire. Part. 3. c. 1, & 4. Collectio Auditor. Versiones Vulg. damnant.

(f) Mandeuent de Monseigneur L' Archevesque de Paris portant defense de lire la Bible en Langue Vulgaire sans permission. Fait le 2 Septemb. 1650.

It is true, there is a little more latitude in France for granting a Licence, for not only the Bishop and his Vicar-General, but the Penitentiary, or a Man's own Parish Priest may grant it (f). But then to make an amends for this, in other Countries, the Rule is made stricter

than it was at first by the Trent Fathers ; for that does

not

not forbid the Vulgar Bible, but only the reading it without a Licence; whereas the 5th Rule of the *Spanish Index*, prohibits the Bibles themselves in the Vulgar Tongue, and all Parts of them too; and that not only Printed, but in Manuscript. (g) And

Alfonfus de Castro tells us, That *Ferdinand King of Spain* forbid any Man under the heaviest Penalties, to translate the Bible into the Vulgar Tongue, or to keep any Bible in his Hands already translated. (h) And in the Index of Pope *Alexander VII*, not only those Bibles that are translated and printed by Hereticks; but all Bibles in any Vulgar Tongue are prohibited (i). Yea so careful are the Clergy in most

Popish Countries to keep the Laity from the Knowledge of the Scriptures, that, as Sir *Edwin Sandys* relates, in their very Sermons, tho they preach for the most part on the Gospel of the Day, yet they do not read, or otherwise recite the Text, but discourse only on such Points of it, as they think fittest; that no sound of Scripture may possess the People. I say, in most Popish Countries, because the use of *France*, as he says, is otherwise. (k)

It would be therefore ridiculous, in *Spain*, to talk of a Licence, because the Bible it self is not there permitted in the Vulgar Tongue. And all that is permitted in other Countries, where the Church of *Rome* bears sway without controul, is, that a Man may read the Holy Scripture, in case he can get a Licence for it.

But now, to whom may this Licence be granted? What, to all Men indifferently, who ask it? No; but to those only who they know can receive no hurt, but increase of

(g) Prohibentur Biblia lingua vulgari extantia, cum omnibus earum partibus impressis aut Manuscriptis; pariter summaria & compendia quamvis historica, eorundam Bibliorum, aut librorum sacre Scripturæ, idiomate aut lingua vulgari.

(h) *Alfonf. de Castro* advers. Hæres. l. 1. c. 13.

(i) Biblia vulgari quocunque idiomate conscripta.

(k) *Sandys's Europæ Speculum*. p. 126, 127.

(l) ----- Quos intellexerint ex huiusmodi lectione, non damnum, sed fidei atque Pietatis augmentum capere posse.

(m) Chap. 7. P. 52.

of Faith and Piety thereby (l). That is, as the *Representer* expresses it, *Those who are not in danger of preferring their own Sense, before that which they receive from their Pastors, and the Church* (m). And may it not be pre-

sumed, that these Men will never so much as ask it? For to what purpose should they desire to read the Scriptures, who are already resolved (right or wrong) to believe as the Priest bids them? Yea, so far are they from desiring it, that they reckon it a Mortal Sin. And should others presume to ask it, it would be denied them; because they cannot so much as ask it, but they will be suspected to be of the number of those Persons, who are in the greatest danger of receiving hurt by it. So that upon the whole Matter, the great noise they make of Licences, is but a meer Sham; since those of the Vulgar who might perhaps obtain them, are never likely to ask them; and those who will be most forward to ask them, will never be able to obtain them.

And that it was indeed a Device of the Clergy, to get the Bible again out of the Hands of the People, among whom it was then dispersed, is plain enough; because whosoever had got a Bible, and had not a Licence, he might not receive Absolution of his Sins, unless he first delivered up his Bible to the Ordinary. And having thus got the Bible again into their own keeping, that they designed, as much as possible, to keep it for the future out of the Hands of the People, is further manifest, from the addition made to this Rule, by Pope Clement VIII, upon the new Impression of it, viz. *That by this Impression or Edition no new Faculty is given to Bishops or Inquirers, or any Superiors of Regulars, to grant a Licence of buying, reading, or retaining the Bible in the Vulgar Tongue;*

since

since hitherto by the command and usage of the Holy, Roman and Universal Inquisition, that Faculty of granting such Licences, of reading or retaining the Vulgar Bibles, or any parts of the Holy Scriptures, as well of the New as the Old Testament, in any Vulgar Tongue, hath been taken from ⁽ⁿ⁾ Observat. Clement. VIII. them. Which, says he, is to be inviolably observed (n). circa Reg. quartam Trid.

If then this Power formerly given of granting Licences be taken away, and no new Power of granting them given, it necessarily follows; That there is now no such thing in being, as a Power of granting Licences. Or had there been any such Power before this new Impression of the Rule was made, yet it was then taken away by the Pope, in decreeing, That the Command and Practice of the Roman Inquisition, was to be inviolably observed. And lest some perhaps might presume to read the Bible, notwithstanding the Penalty threatned to them that do so; to give check as much as might be to such Presumption, the Booksellers who shall sell them to such Persons, besides the loss of the price of the Books, are liable to be punished at the Bishop's Pleasure.

It would be now superfluous to produce Cardinal Belarmin, Sixtus Senensis, Stapleton, Gretser, Ledesna, Azorin, or any other great Names in the Church of Rome, as Witnesses of this Practice. I shall therefore conclude with a brief Recollection of what hath been delivered.

First, In the Pope's or the King of Spain's Dominions, no Vulgar Translation of the Bible is allowed; nor any Parcels or Summaries of the Bible, or of the Stories thereof.

2dly. In those Countries where the Vulgar Bible is not absolutely prohibited, no Man is allowed to read it without a Licence.

3dly.

3dly. This Licence must be granted by the Bishop or Inquisitor only; (though by the Custom of *France* it may be granted by the Penitentiary or Curat.)

4thly. It may not be granted by them; to all Persons who desire it; but to those only of whom they shall understand, that they can receive no hurt by reading it; That is, those of whom they are so secure, that they think there is no fear of losing them; and few or none of these will ever desire it. So that all this talk of granting leave to read the Bible amounts to no more than this, That those who desire it, shall for the most part be denied it. Even the Mareschal of *Chastres's* Lady, notwithstanding her great Quality and Piety, could not without much difficulty get a Licence from the Archbishop of *Sens*. Nor could she by any Means procure it for the whole Bible, but for some certain Books only. (o)

(o) Le Sane-
ctuaire fermé
aux Profanes.
p. 339.

C H A P. II.

THat it is contrary to the Will of God, contrary to Reason, yea contrary to the Practice of the Christian Church, for more than a thousand Years after Christ, not to permit the free use of the Holy Scripture to the Vulgar.

S E C T. I.

That it is the Will of God, That the Vulgar should have the free use of the Scripture, omitting many other Arguments, these three alone may suffice to prove.

i. That

1. That God caused it at first to be written in a Language understood by the Vulgar.
2. He caused it to be directed and addressed to them.
3. He commanded them to acquaint themselves with it.

1. God caused the holy Scriptures to be at first written in a Language understood by the Vulgar. That the Books of *Moses* and the Prophets were written in the common Language of the *Jews*, is generally granted by the *Romanists* themselves. Monsieur *Mallet* indeed, has been so hardy as to say, That it is most probable, that the Books of the Law were not composed by *Moses* in the Vulgar Language of the *Jews*. But the Arguments by which he

attempts to prove it, are not only ridiculous, and in themselves false; but in case they were true, would be so far from establishing what he asserts, that they would quite destroy it: He that hath a Mind to see them exposed, let him consult Monsieur *Arnaud's* (another learned *Romanist*) Confutation of his Book (b); Out of which I shall at present transcribe but one Passage. I shall say a Word only, says he, of *Moses's* last Song, because it is a demonstrative Proof, that there is nothing in the World more manifestly false, than that which Monsieur *Mallet* says is probable; for there is nothing in all the Books of *Moses*, that is more nobly written, and in a more lofty Style than this Song, which he commanded the *Jews* to write, and to learn by Heart, and to sing often, that it might serve as a Testimony against themselves, if they should forsake the Worship of God. He therefore certainly supposed, that they would understand it, since his Intention was, that in singing it, they should be touched and affected with it (c).

dernier Cantique; parce que c'est une preuve demonstrative pour faire voir que Mr. *Mall.* appelle probable la chose du monde la plus visiblement fautive, &c. l. 1. c. 4. p. 55.

(b) De la Lecture de l'Ecriture Sainte contre les Paradoxes extravagans & inimpies de Monsieur *Mallet*.

(c) Je diray Seulement un mot de son mot de son

As for the Books of the New Testament, there is no question (save of two only, the Gospel of St. *Matthew*, and the Epistle to the *Hebrews*) but that they were all written in *Greek*, which was then the most Vulgar Language in the World, there being no other Tongue at that time understood by so many People. And whereas it is objected that the *Latin* was the Vulgar Tongue of the *Romans*, to whom notwithstanding St. *Paul* wrote in *Greek*: The answer is easy, That the *Greek* Tongue was at that time more generally understood, and used at *Rome* it self: It was more known to the Strangers there, and particularly to the *Jews*, whom the Apostle had in his Epistle a special regard to; who were well acquainted with the *Greek*, but for the most part ignorant of the *Latin* Tongue (d). And for the *Romans* themselves, scarce any could be found, no not among their Women, who did not understand it; In such common use was it, that (as Mr. *Arnau* observes) they taught it even their Parrots (e).

(d) Grot. An-
not. in Evang.
S. Marci & E-
pist. ad Heb.

(e) De la Lest.
Eccl. l. 2. c. 13.

(f) Est Pro-
leg. in Com-
ment. in Epist.
ad Hebræos, su-
per hac qua-
stione. Qua
lingua scripta
sit Epist. ad
Hebræos.

If St. *Matthew's* Gospel was written at first in *Hebrew* (as many of the Ancients affirm); by *Hebrew* they meant that which was then the Vulgar Language of the *Jews* who dwelt at *Jerusalem*, for whose sake his Gospel was primarily written. This is asserted by such great Authorities in the Church of *Rome*, as one would think no Romanist should reject; particularly by *Estius* and *Bellarmin*. I shall recite *Bellarmin's* Words, and for brevity sake refer the Reader to *Estius* (f). "It is ver-
ry probable, says the Cardinal, that the Gospel of
"St. *Matthew*, and the Epistle to the *Hebrews* were
"written in the *Syriac* Tongue, for *Albertus Widmesta-*
"dius, and *Guido Fabritius* have proved it by the most
"convincing Arguments: Neither do the ancient Wri-
"ters, *Irenæus*, *Origen*, *Eusebius*, *Athanasius*, *Epiphanius*,
"Jerom,

"*Jerom*, who say these Books (especially the Gospel of *St. Matthew*) were written in Hebrew; contradict these; for they speak of that Hebrew which was the Vulgar Tongue in the time of the Apostles, even as in the Gospel it self we frequently read, that a thing was so call'd in the Hebrew, when it is manifest, that was so call'd in the Syriac: For instance, He went forth into a place call'd the place of a Scull, which is called in the Hebrew *Golgotha*; whereas *Golgotha* is not a proper Hebrew, but a Syriac word (g).

(g) Bell. de Verbo Dei, l. 2. c. 4.

Add to this, That *Eusebius* says expressly, that *St. Matthew* writ his Gospel in his Country Language; and the reason he gives for it, necessarily required that he should do so (h).

(h) *Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast.* l. 3.

For the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, it matters not whether it was originally written in Greek or Syriac, because both these Languages were then generally understood by the Hebrews: Tho *Eftius* has produc'd such Arguments as will not easily be answered, to prove that it was at first written in Greek. To conclude this Argument: Since God caused the Scriptures to be at first written in a Language the Vulgar were acquainted with, who can be so senseless as to imagine, that it was not his pleasure that the vulgar should read them?

2. God at first address'd the Holy Scriptures to the Vulgar, as well as to others: *I have written to him*, (saith God) *the great Things of my Law* (i). Who was he to whom he had written them? The Verse foregoing told us it was *Ephraim*, who is there put for the whole Body of the Israelites. The first Epistle of *St. Paul* to the *Corinthians*, is directed to all that in every Place call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus. The second, to the Church of God which is at *Corinth*, with all the Saints which are in all *Acaia*. For the

(i) *Hoi.* 8. 12.

(k) *The Lay-
Christian's Ob-
ligation to read
the Holy Scrip-
tures.*

rest of the Epistles, I refer the Reader to the Discourse quoted in the Margin (k). Now can any Man who has not quite lost his Understanding suppose, that God would not have these Epistles read, by those Persons to whom they were written?

There are those Persons, I know, who pretend to think so; who tell us, That though St. Paul directed his Epistles to all Christians in general, yet his intention was, that the Pastors of the Church only should read them. But can any thing be said more absurdly? Are not those Epistles he designed for the Pastors, directed to them alone? as his Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus*: Why then should he direct his other Epistles to all the Saints, but that it was his intention, that they all should be made acquainted with them? When his Epistle to the *Philippians* is directed to *ALL the Saints at Philippi, together with the Bishops and Deacons*: Can any Man have the face to say, That he intended it only for the Bishops and Deacons? Is it not as manifest, as that there are such Epistles, that his Speech in them is usually addressed to the People? And let a Man but seriously consider, That in his Epistle to the *Colossians*, he commands, *That after that Epistle had been read among them, they should cause it to be read also in the*

(l) *Coloss. 4.
16.*

(m) *1 Thess.
5. 27.*

Church of the Laodiceans (l): That he gives a most solemn Charge, That his Epistle to the *Thessalonians* should be read to all the Holy Brethren (m); and then believe, if he can, that it was his meaning, that the Scripture should be withheld from any the poorest and most ignorant Christian.

3. Nor has God only addressed the Holy Scriptures to the Vulgar, but he hath also commanded them to acquaint themselves familiarly with them. *The words I command thee this day*, saith God to all *Israel*, (Priests and

and People) shall be in thine Heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently to thy Children, and talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, &c. (n) Can it be supposed, that they should talk of these words, when they sat in their Houses, and when they walked by the way, when they lay down, and when they rose up; that they should bind them for a Sign upon their Hands, and that they should be as Frontlets between their eyes; that they should write them upon the Posts of their Houses, and upon their Gates; that they should teach them diligently to their Children, and yet should not be permitted to read them? When *Moses* had made an end of speaking these words, having said all that he had in charge from God to deliver to this People, he concludes thus: *Set your Hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your Children to observe and do, all the words of this Law; for it is not a vain thing for you, because it is your Life, &c.* (o). Is this said like a Man, that would not have them so much as read the words he had spoken to them?

And for the New Testament, the Command is general to Christians of all States and Qualities, That the Word of Christ dwell in them; and not only so, but that it dwell in them richly; so richly, that they may thereby be indowed with all Wisdom (p). Which St. Chrysostom thought so plain a Command to the common People to read the Scriptures, that in his Sermon upon these words, he thus earnestly exhorts them; *Hearken all ye that are Men of the World, and have a Wife and Children under your Government, how even Thou he commands especially to read the Scriptures; and that not simply, or now and then by chance, but with much diligence* (q). If St. Chrysostom's word be not thought sufficient, I shall add to it a late famous Divine of the Church.

(n) Deut. 6.
6, 7, 8.

(o) Deut. 32.
45, 46, 47.

(p) Coloss. 3.
16.

(q) Hom. 9.
in Epist. ad Coloss.

(r) Espen. in
Epist. ad Tit.
cap. 2 p. 512,
519.

Church of Rome. *What more clear, saith he, than that St. Paul thus exhorts, Coloss. 3. Let the Word of Christ dwell in You. But in what You? In those Saints and Faithful Brethren in Christ that were at Colosse, to whom he inscribed this Epistle, (not as some other Epistles to Bishops, Priests, and Deacons); Let the Word of Christ therefore dwell in You in all Wisdom, &c. (r).* Which the Author speaks to shew, that the reading of the Scriptures ought not to be prohibited to Lay-men. That this Prohibition is indeed contrary to the Will of God, will yet further appear, by shewing that it is very absurd and unreasonable.

S E C T. II.

(s) Search the
Scriptures,
p. 58.

Let us hear what common Reason saith, (to use the words of a Reverend Person of our own Church, in an excellent Treatise upon this Subject) and that teaches us, That since the Holy Scriptures were written for the use and benefit of all, all should have the liberty to read them. They were written for all, it is plain; for that which they teach is the Duty of all, that which they promise is the Portion of all (s).

Dare any one say, That the Scripture was not given as a Rule to the People? That it was not designed to teach them, not only what they are concerned to *know* and to *do* in the general as they are *Men*, or as they are *Christians*, but to instruct them also more particularly, how they ought to demean themselves in their several Callings and Relations, in their different States and Conditions of Life, that they may walk worthy of God in this World, and be made meet for the happiness of the next? And what can be more absurd, than that a Man should not be suffered to read those Lessons, which,

which as he hopes for Salvation, he is bound to learn? That he should not be permitted the perusal of those Laws, which under peril of Damnation he is bound to obey? That he should be forbid to see with his own Eyes, what God hath promised to quicken him to his Duty; and what he hath threatned to deter him from the contrary?

Are not the Scriptures (as St. *Chrysostom* calls them) the Weapons of our Spiritual Warfare, the Storehouse of Spiritual Medicines (t)? Are they not given for a Light to our Feet and a Lamp to our Paths (u)? And therefore to deprive the People of them, what is it else, but to take away the Light from a Man in darkness? To deny Medicines to one that is sick? Or to deprive a Souldier of those Weapons, by which he should defend himself, and repel his Enemies? What the the Representer says in opposition to this shall be anon considered.

I shall add no more upon this Head, than what I shall borrow from some great and learned Men of the Church of Rome. The Bishop of *Vence* in his Dedicatory Epistle prefixed to his Translation of the New Test. addresses thus to all Christians indifferently: *Behold it is the Testament of the Son of God, your Father and your Judge, which I offer to you: I cannot doubt but the reading of it will be acceptable to you. You will see that he hath there left you a Patrimony most divine, which is his Truth; and that he hath divided it in a wonderful manner: For though it be but one, yet he hath suited it to the condition, and to the Duties of every Man, to the end that all Men by practising its Precepts, may live in Peace, and may come to the possession of his Inheritance, which is eternal Life* (x).

(t) Hom. 9. in Epist. ad Colof.
(u) Psal. 119. 105.
Prov. 6. 23.

(x) Voicy le Testament du Fils de Dieu vostre Pere et vostre Juge, que je Vous offre. Je ne puis douter que la lecture ne vous en soit agreable. Vous verrez qu' il vous y laisse un patrimoine tout divin, qui est la Verite &c.

The

The Translators of the *Mons Testament* in their Preface have these Words: *If God heretofore commanded his People to read that Law without ceasing, which he had given them, and to meditate in it day and night. And if the Religious believe themselves obliged to read perpetually, the Rule they have received from their Founder. How can we neglect to read the Law of Jesus Christ, the words of which are Spirit and Life? since being entred by Baptism*

(y) Que si Dieu avoit commandé autrefois à son peuple de lire sans cesse la loy qu' il luy avoit donnée et de la mediter jour et nuit; et si les Religieux se croient obligez de lire tous les jours la Regle qu' ils ont recüe de leur Instituteur: comment pouvons nous negliger de lire la loy de Jesus Christ &c
P. 43 5.

into the Catholick and Universal Religion, of which Jesus Christ is the Founder, we ought to look upon the Gospel as our Rule, which teaches us his Will, which assures us of his Promises, which is our Light in this World, and which must one Day be our Judge (y)? In the Judgment of these Learned Men of

the Church of Rome, to deny the reading of the Scriptures to the People, is as unreasonable and unjust, as not to suffer an Heir to see his Father's Will, or to forbid the Regulars the sight of their Rule.

If any Man shall think that these Testimonies are not weighty enough, I shall add another, which cannot be refused by those Men I now dispute against, viz. That of Pope Gregory the Great: *The holy Scripture, saith he, as a kind of Looking-glass is set before the Eyes of our Mind, that our inward Face may be seen by it. By it we know what in us is foul and what is fair; by it we perceive how much we profit; by it how far we are from profiting. It declares the brave Exploits of the Saints, and provokes the weak to the imitation of them; and while it commemorates their victorious Acts, it confirms and strengthens our weakness against the assaults of Vice, and we are the less fearful in the Encounter, by seeing the foregoing Triumphs of so many valiant Men. But sometimes it sets before us not on-*

ly their Virtues but their Falls, that in the Victory of the strong, we may find that which we ought to imitate, and again in their Falls, that which we ought to fear (z). I appeal now to the

(z) Scriptura sacra mentis oculis quasi quoddam speculum opponitur, ut interna nostra facies in ipsa videatur, &c. Expos. Moral in 1 cap. Job l. 2. c. 1. fol. 4. K

Romanists themselves, Whether this great Pope, thought it not fit, that the reading of the Holy Scriptures should be left free to every Man? If they say no; I question not but to make them confess it whether they will or no, in the following parts of this Discourse.

S E C T. III.

Nor is the practice of the Roman Church now, less contrary to the practice of the whole Christian Church, for more than a thousand Years after Christ.

That the Scriptures lay open to all sorts of Persons in the Jewish Church, I need not prove; It is sufficiently known by that Passage of *Josephus* (a) frequently quoted by Protestant Writers, viz. *That if any Man ask a Jew concerning the Laws, he will tell him every thing more readily than his Name; for learning them as soon as they come to have sence of any thing, they retain them deeply imprinted in their Minds.* And *Maimonides* informs us, That it did not suffice a Jew, barely to read the Law; but he was to write it too. For tho a Father had left his Son a Copy of the Law, he was notwithstanding obliged to write for himself, another Copy with his own Hand; or procure it to be written, if he could not write himself. And therefore the Pentateuch at least (as *Morinus* a Learned Romanist infers) (b) that is the Books of *Moses*, were in the Hands of all the Jews; and frequently many Copies were in one Family, because they were wont to keep those that were left by their Fathers.

(a) Joseph. l. 2. contr. Ap. pion.

(b) Exercit. Bibl. l. 2. Exercit. 16. c. 1. n. 6, 7.

D

But

But my design at present, is to shew, That the practice of the *Christian Church* (yea of the *Roman Church* it self heretofore) was quite contrary to the Rules and Practice of the Church of *Rome* now : And that this may be made so evident, that those who wish it were false may be constrain'd to confess it : I shall proceed in the same Method, that a Reverend Author hath done in a late learned Discourse upon another controverted Point

(c) A Vindication of the Answer to some Papers, &c. (c) ; viz. I shall prove by unquestionable Testimonies, for twelve hundred Years downward, from our Saviour's Birth, that the reading of the Scripture had no restraint put upon it, but was left in common to all Christians.

That it was so in the first Age, we have undeniable Evidence in the Scripture it self. Would our Saviour and his Apostles in their popular Discourses, so frequently have sent their Hearers to the Scriptures, had they not then been allowed to read them (d) ? Could the *Be- reans* have searched the Scriptures, to see whether those things that were spoken by *Paul* were so (e), had not the Scripture been in their Hands ? Had not all the Saints in all *Achaia* been permitted to read the Scriptures, could St. *Paul* have said truly to them, *We write none other things to you than what you read* (f) ? That very Text so frequently produced by Romish Writers, to prove that the Vulgar ought not to read the Scriptures (g), is an Argument that in the Apostles time they did so : For it is not easie to conceive, how the *unlearned and unstable* should wrest the Scriptures, had they never read them.

(h) Ἐπίταξις καὶ χαλῶς ἐπίταξις τὰς ἱεράς γραφάς, ἡ ἡμεῖς ὡρᾶτε ἐς τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ. In the same Age, in St. *Clement's* Epistle directed to all the Christians at *Corinth*, we find these Words : *You have known Beloved, you have well known the holy Scriptures, you have thoroughly looked into the Oracles of God, &c.* (h) And

And if the Christians at *Corinth* were so conversant in the Scriptures, surely the Christians of *Rome*, in the time of this Bishop, were not forbidden to read them.

Toward the end of the second Age, *Clement of Alexandria* gives this Character of a Christian; *His whole Life is a holy Solemnity, his Sacrifices are*

Prayers and Praises, and conferences of the Scriptures before his Meal, and Psalms and Hymns while he is at it (i).

Certainly no Restraint was then laid upon the reading of the Scripture, when it was the common Practice of Christians to read it, and make it the matter of their Discourse at their Meals.

For the third Century (tho many other Witnesses stand ready, yet) *Origen* alone may suffice. Whether we consider, 1. How early he himself was educated in the Scriptures: Or 2. What he hath left on record to this purpose.

First, His Father *Leonides* before he put him to other Learning, put him upon the study of the Scriptures, of which he set him a daily Task, to learn by heart (k). Now his Father being a Lay-man, and he himself then a Child (for the Father was crown'd with Martyrdom, before the Son was seventeen years old) what *Arnaud* hence infers, undeniably follows viz. That the Church then thought it good, not only for Lay-men to read the Scriptures, but to make their Children also read them in their tender Age.

2. Of those many Passages which *Arnaud* and others have observed in his Writings, it will be sufficient to produce one: directing his Speech to all Christians without distinction he thus exhorts them: *We beseech you not to content your selves to hear the Word of God, when*

(i) Ἄνθρωπος δὲ ὁ ἐκ τῆς ἀνθρώπων, πάντων
ἐστὶν ἁγία; ἀνθρώπου δὴντας μὲν ἀνθρώπου, ἐν-
καὶ τῆς ἀνθρώπων, καὶ αἱ πρὸς τῆς ἐστῆσαν
ἐν τῶν ἐκ τῆς γὰρ τῶν; ἁγίους δὲ καὶ
ὁμοίως τῶν ἐστῆσαν. Stromat. l. 7.
p. 728. Edit. 1629.

(k) Euseb.
Hist. Ecclesiast.
l. 6. c. 2,

read in the Church, but to apply your selves to it at home, and to meditate upon it day and night; for Jesus Christ is there present as well as in the Church, and they that seek him shall find him every where. Therefore he hath commanded us to meditate in the Law of the Lord, when we walk by the

(l) Hom. 9. in
Levit.

way, and when we sit in our Houses, when we lye down, and when we rise up (l).

(m) Quid com-
memorem Lai-
cos, qui tunc in
Ecclesia nulla
fuerant dignita-
te suffulti? &c.
Optat. advers.
Paymen. l. 1.

In the beginning of the fourth Age, it is certain that the Bible was in Lay-mens hands, because in *Dioclesian's* Persecution, many Lay-men, to save themselves, delivered up their Bibles to be burnt (m).

That in the succeeding Parts of that Age, under the Christian Emgots, they had the free use of them is as manifest; because we find that all sorts of People were frequently and earnestly pressed by their Teachers to read them.

I shall not insist upon what is by others produc'd out of *St. Jerom*, viz. The Dedication of his Commentaries upon the Scriptures to Women, his Epistles to many of that Sex, in which he highly commends them for their study of the Scriptures, and exhorts them diligently to instruct their Children therein: How he advised *Gaudentius* to cause his Daughter at seven years old to get the Psalms by Heart, and when she should come to the age of twelve, to treasure up in her Heart the Books of *Solomon*, the Gospels, the Epistles of the Apostles, and the Prophets. But (omitting these) I think it enough, to tell you, that even Father *Thomassin* affirms, that this Father most straitly charged, not only the Clergy and the Religious (that is, Monks and Nuns) to read the Scriptures; but recommended the reading of them to all sorts of Persons, without distinction of Age or Sex, even to Women and Girls (n). What pretence then have the Papists, for quoting *St. Jerom* as one

(n) Part. 1. l.
11. c. 10. n. 6.

of their side? You shall hear. In his Epistle to *Paulinus* he complains, That whereas Men of all other Arts contain'd themselves within the bounds of their own Profession, every one took upon him to be a Teacher of the Scriptures, even the *doting old Man, and the tatling old Wife*, &c. (o) an unanswerable Argument, that the most simple of both Sexes did then freely read the Scriptures; For could they presume to *teach* them, had they never *read* them? Nor doth he blame their *reading* them, but that they took upon them to be Teachers, before they themselves had learnt them; *docent antequam discant*.

(o) Quod Medicorum est promittunt Medici, tractant fabrilis Fabri; Sola Scripturarum ars est quam sibi passim omnes vendicant.----hanc garrula anus, hunc delirus senex, &c.

How vehement and copious St. *Austin* is, in his Exhortations to his Hearers, of all Ranks and Qualities, to read the Scriptures, you may be inform'd by another Learned Papist (p). I shall give but a taste: *It may not suffice*, says he, *that You hear the Divine Scriptures read in the Churches; but in Your Houses, either read them Your selves, or get others to read, and do You readily hearken to them. Hear the Divine Scriptures read in the Church, as You are wont, and read them over again at Home. If any be so employ'd, that before his repast, he cannot have leisure, let it not grieve him, to read something of them at his Meal; that as the Body is fed with Meat, so the Soul may be refresh'd with the Words of God; that the whole Man, both outward and inward, may arise satisfied from a holy and wholsom Banquet, &c.* (q).

(p) Espenc. Comment. in Epist. ad Tit. c. 2. p. 517. Ed. Paris. 1619.

(q) De Tempore Serm. 55, 56, 57. De Sanctis Serm. 38.

What the same learned Romanist, hath to the same purpose produc'd out of St. *Chrysostom*, if the Representer please to read, methinks it should put him to the blush. I shall only observe, That this incomparable Saint, makes the reading of the Scriptures, not only necessary for all Men, of whatsoever rank they be, but more necessary

(s) Search the
Scriptures, p. 40

necessary for those whose Business lies in the midst of the World, than for those who live more retired from it. As you may see by many pregnant Proofs, in that excellent Treatise before mention'd (s).

(t) Cateches.
4. de Sacra.
Script. p. 36,
37, 38. Edit.
Par. 1640.

Tho I omit many, as St. Basil, St. Hilary, St. Ambrose, &c. yet I shall mention two more Witnesses in this Age; The first, is Julian the Apostate, who derides the Christians for breeding up their Children in the knowledge of the Scriptures. The second, is St. Cyril Bishop of Jerusalem, who in his Catechisms for the Illuminate, (that is, Persons newly baptiz'd) charges them to read all the Books both of the Old and New Testament, and diligently to meditate upon them (t).

(u) Lib. 7. contra
Julianum.

In the fifth Age, Cyril of Alexandria, in his Books against Julian, informs us. That it was then also the practice of Christians, not barely to read the Scriptures themselves, but to train up their Children in them. And in answer to the Apostate's scurrilous Objections, he shews what Advantages accru'd to them by being early instructed in the Divine Scripture, above all that could be expected from the Learning of the Greeks (u).

In the sixth Age, Pope Gregory the Great, in a popular Sermon, thus exhorts his Hearers: Study, most dear Brethren, the Words of God. Do not despise the Letters our Maker hath sent us. It is a great advantage, that by them the Soul is quicken'd, lest it should be benumm'd with the cold of its iniquity. When we there see, that Just Men have done valiantly, we our selves are disposed to courage in well-doing. The Soul of the Reader is enkindled by the Flame of Holy Examples. It sees their noble Acts, and is displeased with it self, that it doth not imitate them. Hence in the Voice of the Bridgroom it is said to the Bride, Thy Neck is like the Tower of David, builded for an Ar-

mory,

mony, whereon there hang a thousand Bucklers. In the Neck is the Throat, in the Throat is the Voice; What therefore is meant by the Neck of Holy Church, but its Sacred Oracles, whereon a thousand Shields are said to hang, because all our defence is contained in the Sacred Oracles. For there are the Commandments of God, there are the Examples of Just Men. If the Soul grow cold in the love of God, let it hear what is said; Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength, &c. (w) He that desires to see more to this purpose, let him consult his moral Exposition of the Book of Job, (especially l. 20.) ; his Epistle to Leander Archbishop of Sevil, and read his famous Story of Poor Servulus (x). And when he has done so, I shall leave him to judge, whether this great Pope was of the same judgment with Pope Pius IV, and the Trent Fathers? Whether the Holy Scriptures were not in his time read at Rome, by the most unlearned Vulgar?

For the seventh Age, Isidore Archbishop of Sevil, is a Witness beyond exception: The Holy Scripture, faithful, to the weak, and those that are Children in understanding, as to its History, seems low in words; when to more excellent Men it rises higher, while it opens to them its Mysteries, and by this means it remains common, both to the little Ones and to the Perfect. The Holy Scripture is varied in proportion to the Understanding of every Reader; as Manna, which to the ancient People gave a different taste, according to their different Palats, &c. (y)

(w) Hom. 16.
Super Ezech.

(x) Hom. 19.
de divers. Lect.
Evangelii.

(y) Scriptura
Sacra infirmis
& sensu par-

vis secundum historiam humilis videtur in Verbis; cum excellentioribus autem viris alius incedit dum eis sua mysteria pandit, atq; per hoc utrisq; manet communis, & parvulis & perfectis sententiar. L. 1. c. 19.

That

That the same practice continu'd in the eighth Age, we are assured by venerable *Bede*, and the Saxon Homilies. In his Character of *Aidan* Bishop of the *Northumbrians*, he makes it none of the least of his Vertues, *That he was so far from the sloth of the Age, that all that went with him, whether Clergy or Lay-men, were obliged to meditate, that is, to take pains to read the Scriptures, or to learn the Psalms. This, saith he, was his daily Work,* (c) Hist. Ecclesiast. l. 3. c. 5. *and the Work of all those that were with him (z).*

And because the reading of the Scriptures was then too generally neglected, the Saxon Church endeavoured a Remedy for this Evil in her Homilies; out of which I shall cite but one Passage, viz. *The reading of the Holy Scriptures, purges the Soul of the Reader. It brings to mind the fear of eternal Punishment; it also lifts up his Heart to the Joy Above. Whosoever would be together with God, he ought to pray often, and often to read the Holy Scriptures; for when we pray, we speak to God, and when we read the Holy Bible, God speaks to us. The reading of the Holy Bible brings a double benefit to the Readers: The first, That it informs the Mind; the other, That it takes it off from the Trifles of this World, to the love of God. How far was the Church yet from believing, That Lay-mens reading of the Scriptures, did more hurt than good. He that hath a mind to see more out of the Saxon Homilies, let him consult the Notes on Bede's Ecclesiastical History (a).* (a) Lib. 3. p. 172, 173. 174. l. 4. p. 310.

In the 9th Age, *Rabannus Maurus* Archbishop of Mentz speaks thus: *That Divine Wisdom which shines forth in the Holy Scripture, is both to the Strong and Weak, both to the Wise and Foolish, if they will mind it, and truly obey it, a wholsom Medicine. It is the enlightning of the Mind, the Correction of Life, the Path of Righteousness. And there-*

therefore both the greater and the lesser, do want its help, and stand in need of its conduct (b).

(b) Sapientia Divina quæ in Sacra Scriptura elucet, omnibus tam potentibus quam infirmis, tam sapientibus quam insipientibus, si eam recte intenderint, & ei rite obedierint, Medicina Salubris est. Ipsa est Illuminatio animæ, &c.

In the tenth, Odo Abbat of Clugny tells us ; That by the wild Goats which God speaks of to Job, are meant all good and wise Men. For as these Goats abide in the Rocks, and if they at any time fall from their Heights, they keep themselves unhurt in their Flesh : So these good Men dwell in the Rocks, because they endeavour to live according to the Examples of the Fathers ; and when they fall at any time, they are not dashed in pieces, because leaning upon the Scriptures of the two Testaments, they escape, and by the comfort of them, sustain themselves, that they do not faint in trouble (c). It seems, the Scriptures were yet thought useful to every Man, to support and comfort him in Troubles and Afflictions. *(c)* Collat. l. 3.

In the eleventh Age, hear what Advice Theophylact gives to Parents : If thou wilt have thy Children obey thee, instruct them in the Word of God ; say not, that it belongs only to Monks to read the Scriptures, for it is the Duty of every Christian ; especially of those who are conversant in the World, who stand in need of greater Assistances, as Men tossed in a Storm. 'Tis thy Concern and Interest, that they hear the Scriptures, for they will thence learn to honour their Father and Mother (d). So far was this great Bishop from thinking the reading of the Scriptures hurtful to the Laity, that he thought it more necessary for them, than others ; so far from confining them only to the Learned, that he would have Children, the most ignorant of the Laity, to read them. *(d)* Theoph. in Ephes. c. 6. v. 4.

In the twelfth Age, Rupertus Tuitiensis says ; That the Holy Scripture is rightly called a Field, because it is in

E

truth

(e) Sancta Scriptura recte dicitur a-
 ter, quia profecto res publica est, res
 in aperto posita, & cunctis hominibus,
 imò populis omnibus legere vel audi-
 re capientibus proposita est. L. 1. de
 Glorific. Trinit.

*truth a publick thing, that lies open,
 and is propos'd to all Men who are desi-
 rous to read or hear it (e).* To whom
 we may add St. Bernard, who in a
 popular Discourse earnestly exhorts

his Hearers, to apply themselves to the Scriptures,
 from the consideration of those inestimable Benefits they
 would receive thereby (f).

(f) Serm. 24.
 de diversis.

Thus I have shew'd the practice of the Christian
 Church to the twelfth Age; not from the Testimonies
 of obscure and suspected Authors, but of Men famous
 in their Generations, and whose Names are held in great
 veneration in the Church of *Rome*. Which I have the
 rather done, because some Persons have had the confi-
 dence to bear the World in hand, that in the Primitive
 Church, a restraint was laid upon the reading of the
 Scripture. An Assertion so manifestly untrue, that we
 need desire no clearer Proofs of the contrary, than
 those two or three Passages out of the Ancients, they
 produce for it.

If the Reader desire to know, when, and upon
 what occasion this Liberty was first taken from Lay-
 men, I'll now tell him. The first Synodical Prohibiti-
 on, was that of the Synod of *Tholouse*, in the Year
 1228, in these words: *We forbid that Lay-men be per-
 mitted to have the Books of the Old and New Testament;
 unless perhaps some one out of Devotion, desire to have
 the Psalter or Breviary for Divine Offices, and the Hours
 of the Blessed Virgin; but even those now mentioned, they
 may not have translated in the vulgar Tongue.* (g)

(g) Prohibe-
 mus etiam
 ne Libros

Veteris & Novi Testamenti Laici permittantur habere; nisi forte Psalterium aut Breviarium
 pro Divinis Officiis ac horas Beatæ Virginis aliquis ex devotione habere velit: Sed ne præ-
 missos libros habeant in vulgari Translatos. D' Acherii, Tom. 2. p. 624.

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The special occasion of this Decree, was the preaching of the *VValdenses*; who taught, that in Articles of Faith, the Holy Scripture was the Rule, by which Men were to judge, that whatsoever was not agreeable to the Word of God, ought to be rejected. That the reading and knowledge of the Scripture, was free and necessary to all Men, both Laity and Clergy *. By this time the Church of *Rome* had gotten such a new Faith, as would not abide the old Test; and therefore it was prudently done, to deprive the People of the Scripture, that they might not be able to discover those Errors into which they led them.

* Cent. 12. Ecclesiast. Hist. c. 8.

C H A P. III.

LET us now see what the *Representer* offers, to justify this Practice of the present Church of *Rome*, so manifestly repugnant to Scripture, to Reason, and to the ancient Practice of the Church of *Rome* it self; yea, of the whole Christian Church throughout the World.

Surely, they must be very weighty Reasons, or else they will never bear down so great a weight, as lies in the other Scale against them. Does he shew, that God hath retracted his first Grant? That he hath repealed his old Law, and established one quite contrary in the room of it? Does he shew, That the Reason of the Thing is changed? So that if the Primitive Fathers were alive again, they would now with as much earnestness dissuade Lay-men from reading the Scripture, as they formerly exhorted them to it? Had he done thus, he had spoken to the purpose: But, alas! we

find nothing of this, nor any thing like it.

What then are his Reasons? You shall now hear: And I shall endeavour to represent them to the best advantage, without abating one grain of their just weight. They are all reducible to this one general Head, *viz.* The *Mischiefs* that arise from the *promiscuous* reading of the Scripture; several of which he mentions, and insists upon; and then acquaints us with the Reasons (as he supposes) of those *Mischiefs*. That therefore my Discourse upon them may be the more clear and distinct, I shall divide it into these three parts.

1. I shall consider the General Reason.
2. The Particulars he insists upon.
3. The Reasons he gives why these *Mischiefs* flow from the free reading of the Bible.

S E C T. I.

The general Reason he gives of this Restraint, is; The *Mischiefs* that arise from the *promiscuous* reading of the Bible: *since these, and infinite other Mischiefs arise from the free permitting the Bible among the Multitude, He (viz. the Papist) thinks it commendable in his Church, out of a true solicitude for the Salvation of Souls, to prevent those Evils, by teaching the true sense of this Sacred Volume—without leaving the Book to be scann'd by them as they please; and so not permitting them to turn the Food of their Souls into Poison, or abuse that to their Destruction, which was ordain'd by Christ for their gaining of Heaven (b).* But if out of pure kindness to the Souls of the Vulgar, they take away this dangerous Book from them; Why do they give them other very perilous Books in the room of it? I mean *Images* (which they

(*) Chap. 7.
p. 52.

they call Lay-mens Books) tho by the Confession of many of their own Writers, they are horribly abused by the Vulgar. But to pass that;

This is the Argument they commonly insist upon, and tho it hath been wretchedly baffled again and again, yet for want of a better, it is upon every occasion dress'd up anew, and urged with as brisk a Confidence, as if it had never before been heard of.

He says he *does sincerely, respect, honour and reverence the Scripture* (i). But methinks he expresses his *respect* (i) Chap. 6. and *reverence*, as untowardly, as the *Lindians* did to- P. 44. ward their God *Hercules*, whom they worshipped by throwing Stones at him. For what is this, but to say, that the Bible is the most dangerous Book in the World? since a Lay-man cannot read it, without danger of being eternally undone by it: And if this be to *honour and reverence* the Scripture, I know not what it is to *revile* it.

The Representer will say this is a *false Inference*. I shall be glad if he can make that appear, for nothing seems to follow more naturally from the Premises. He will say, he does not impute these *Mischiefs* to the *Scripture* (k) Chap. 7. *it self*, but to *Mens Abuse* of it (k). What then? P. 52. the danger is not the less, if it be so apt to be abused, that scarce any Man can read it who will not so abuse it. Let us suppose there are two things, the one of which is an excellent Antidote, if rightly used, but so hard a matter it is so to use it, that not one in an hundred can be found, to whom it doth not turn to Poyson: The other is it self a rank Poyson, yet may be so temper'd, and taken with that caution, that it may become an Antidote: Is not now this Antidote (however excellent in it self) as dangerous as the Poyson?

But

(1) Pag. 52.

But if these Mischiefs proceed meerly from Mens Abuse of Scripture, why is it then denied to those who do not thus abuse it? For in that he says, *Such as for the MOST PART are not capable of reading it as they ought, have not leave to read it; and those that are capable may have IN MOST COUNTRIES leave to read it, as they please (1).* He plainly grants, that *Some* have not leave to read it, who are capable of reading it as they ought, and that *in some Countries* they cannot obtain this leave, tho they never so much desire it. Where, by *capable of reading as they ought*, he must (if he speak sense) mean those who will not abuse it; tho it is a great mistake to confound these two, as if they were the same, when they are as different, the one from the other, as a sick Man is from one that is not capable of being well; and therefore to say that a Man who *abuses* the Scripture, is not *capable* of reading it as he ought, is as absurd, as that a sick Man is not capable of recovering his Health. Were indeed all those that abuse the Scripture incapable of reading it to good purpose, I should not deny, but they might with good reason be deprived of it: But if they must be denied it for no other reason but because they abuse it; then let all Men be deprived of their Eyes, their Ears, their Tongues &c. there being no Man by whom these are not more or less abused: Yea let not only some, but every Man in the World, be denied the reading of the Scripture; because (I fear) there is scarce any Man who is most careful to avoid it, but he may some time or other, through weakness or ignorance abuse it.

It is therefore certain, that a Man ought not for every Abuse to be deprived of this Priviledg: And if for any of those mentioned by the Representer, our blessed Saviour and his *Apostles* were much to blame, who put
all

all Men indifferently upon the study of the Scripture, notwithstanding all *these Abuses* were as high in their time, as they have been in any Age since. Did I say *not for every Abuse*? I will add, not for *any Abuse*, unless there can be *any* that God did not foresee; for since notwithstanding *any such Abuse*, he gave free liberty to all Men, who can deny it to any, unless they will take upon them to correct God?

And yet when all is done; in case Men are to be denied the reading of the Scripture, because they abuse it; then those above all others ought to be denied it, who most extravagantly abuse it. I mean those, who prove the Pope is as much greater than the Emperor, as the Sun is greater than the Moon, from *Gen. 1. 16. God made two great Lights, the greater Light to rule the Day, and the lesser Light to rule the Night.* That in the Churches Power are two Swords, the Temporal and the Spiritual; from that Speech of St. Peter to Christ, *Behold, here are two Swords.* That the Pope is an absolute universal Sovereign; because Christ said to St. Peter, *Feed my Sheep.* That a married Man cannot please God, because St. Paul saith, *They that are in the Flesh cannot please God.* And to give one Instance in the Subject we are now upon; That no unlearned Man may presume to meddle with the Scripture, because God commanded, *That if a Beast touch'd the Mountain, it should be stoned, or thrust through with a Dart.* Did ever Men more abuse the Scripture than those, who for bad purposes put such absurd ridiculous Senses upon it? And yet these are the Men, who have taken upon them to be the only infallible Interpreters of it. Let all impartial Men then judge, who best deserves to be forbidden to read it, Whether his *Holiness*, or an honest *Mechanic*? The Truth is, the Pope and his Clergy have set up a Worldly Religion, so directly opposite

(m) Verger.
 Confil. de Rom.
 Ecclef. stabili-
 enda.

posite to that of Christ, that the *Heretical Scriptures*, however *tortured*, will never be brought to a compliance with. The *Mischiefs* they talk of that arise from the *Vulgar*, are but pretended; the *Mischiefs* that come to *themselves* thereby, are those they are indeed afraid of; as was plainly confessed to Pope *Julius III.*, by those Bishops assembled at *Bononia* to consult about the establishment of the Roman Church (m).

I shall not insist upon it, That the *Representer* is so intent upon the *Mischiefs*, that he quite forgets the *Benefits* which arise from *reading* the *Scriptures*, and those many intolerable *Mischiefs* which flow from the neglect of it; which the ancient Fathers have largely insisted upon. The *reading of the Divine Scriptures*, says *St. Chrysostom*, is a *Spiritual Meadow*, a *Paradise of Delights*; a better *Paradise of Delight* than that other *Paradise*. God hath planted this *Paradise* not in the *Earth*, but in the *Souls of Believers*: He hath placed it not in *Eden* or toward the *East*, confining it to one place, but hath extended it to the *Ends of the World*. — Here is no *Serpent*, it is a place free from wild *Beasts*, and fenced with the *Grace of the holy Spirit*. — And this *Paradise* hath a *Fountain* as the other had, a *Fountain* from which not only four, but *myriads of Rivers* flow: — Would you know the *Nature* of it, know it from its use. It is not profitable to this present *Life*, but to the *Life eternal*. Let us spend our *Time* in this *Paradise*, let us sit by this *Fountain*, let us abide in the *reading of these Scriptures*. For as those that sit by a *Fountain*, and enjoy that cool refreshing *Air*, and when the *Sun* grows hot, dipping their *Face* continually, do drive away the stifling *Heat*, and easily cure their troublesome *Thirst*: So he that sits by the *Fountain of the Divine Scriptures*, if the flame of *Lust* annoy him, bathing his *Soul* in these *Waters*, he may easily extinguish it. If fierce *Anger* molest him, inflaming his
 Heart

Heart as a boiling Cauldron, by instilling a little of this Water, he may presently repress the importunity of the Passion; and from all evil Cogitations the reading of the Divine Scriptures delivers the Soul. For which Reason the great Prophet David, knowing the advantage that comes by reading the Scriptures, compares the Man who constantly attends to the Scriptures, to a Plant placed by the Rivers of Waters, which always flourishes. For as that Tree is not hurt by unseasonable Air, or by the scorching Rays of the Sun: So that Soul that stands by the flowings of the Divine Scriptures, and is continually watered by them, is unconquerable; if Sickness, Loss, false Accusation, Revilings,—Teas if all the Evils in the World assault such a Soul, he easily repels all Perturbations of Mind, having sufficient Consolation from the reading of the Scriptures ⁽ⁿ⁾. If any Man lift to see more to this purpose, let him consult the Sermon. And as the Benefits are many and so great, that a Man may reap from the reading of the Scripture, so the same St. Chrysostom tells us, that Myriads of Mischiefs spring from the neglect of it ^(o); many of which he hath given us a particular account of in several of his Sermons.

⁽ⁿ⁾ De utilitate lectionis Script.

^(o) Proem. in Epist. ad Rom.

S E C T. II.

Let us now consider what these *Mischiefs* are the *Representer* makes such a Noise about. Besides those mentioned by him, he says, there are *infinite other* ^(p). Those *infinite other*, I can say nothing to, because I know not what they are: If he please to tell us *some* of them (for we cannot expect he should enumerate *all*, because they are *infinite*) they shall be considered. All those he is pleased to mention are of the same kind, *viz.* the Divisions that are among Christians from the different Senses

^(p) Pag. 52.

(1) Pag. 52.

(r) Pag. 54.

(s) Chap. 9.
pag. 57.

they put upon the Scripture, thereby making as many Bibles as there are Men. *The unhappy Divisions*, says he, *which are among Christians, sufficiently inform him, that to such Readers as St. Peter calls unwary and ignorant, however wise they may think themselves, Arianism may be as obvious in this Book, as Christ's Divinity; and that when such an one undertakes the interpretation of it, 'tis an hazard whether at the end, he comes out Quaker, Anabaptist, Presbyterian, Independent, Muggletonian, Socinian or Atheist: 'Tis a venture whether the Trinity shall have place in his Creed or no: Whether he'll allow of Baptism or any Sacrament; and whether Cruelty, cutting of Throats, Oppression, Tyranny, Dethroning of Kings and Murder of Princes, shall not with him become a necessary Duty, and a true serving of the Lord, &c. (q).* And in another place, the Reason he gives, why the Holy Scriptures are not generally allowed to the Vulgar, is this; *That there may not be as many different Bibles among them, as there are Heads (r): Which is in effect the same with the former. And in a third; That it is not only thus in SEVERAL PEOPLE, but even the SAME PERSON many times hath the faculty of multiplying the Word of God (s).* That is, by reading the Scriptures, Men are not only divided one from another, but the same Person is at different times, divided from himself, by putting one Sense upon them at one time, and another, at another.

I shall observe one thing by the way, before I come to expose the Folly of this way of Reasoning. Had not this Gentleman vainly presumed, that the Vulgar of our Communion, are as ignorant as those of his own, in other Countries, he would not have laid so great stress upon these Words of St. Peter (*the unlearned and unstable*) and repeated them thrice within the compass of one half Sheet,

Sheet, (tho perhaps for a disguise in the words now cited, he puts *unwary and ignorant* instead of *unlearned and unstable*) since they are so far from proving what he designs, that they are a fair Argument for the contrary. For, as I before observed, could the *unlearned* have wrested the Scriptures, had they not read them? And if because they wrested them, they were to be forbidden to read them, would not the Apostle (when the matter requir'd it) have told them so, and given this in charge to the Pastors of the Church? Had he been of the same judgment with his Successors at *Rome*, for the last three or four hundred years, was it possible he should have forgotten this? I appeal to the *Representer's* own Conscience: Does he think it was *St. Peter's* intention that this Epistle of his should not be read by those to whom he wrote it? If not, he intended it should be read by the *Vulgar*, for 'tis certain it was written to such.

I shall now proceed to the particular consideration of these *Mischiefs*. Which tho all (as I said before) of the same kind; yet because to make the greater shew, the *Representer* hath put them into a different dress of words, and discoursed of them apart in three several Chapters (t), lest I should be thought to wave any thing material to his purpose, I shall also speak to them severally, and they are these:

I. *The many Divisions that are among Christians* (u). (a) Chap. 7.

II. *As many different Bibles as there are different Heads* (w). P. 52.

III. *Not only several People, but even the same Person* (x). (w) Chap. 8.

many times has the faculty of multiplying the Word of God (x). P. 54. (x) Chap. 9. P. 57.

I. Having just before spoken of the many unhappy *Mischief* I. Divisions among Christians, he says, *That these and infinite other Mischiefs arise from the free permitting the Bible among the Multitude* (y). Now if he speaks to the (y) Page. 52.

purpose, his meaning must of necessity be ; That *all these many unhappy Divisions* arise from this cause *only*, or at least from this cause *principally*. And therefore no more is here needful than to discover the falseness of this Assertion. However I shall be more liberal, and shew these two things: 1. That what is here affirm'd is notoriously false. 2. That in case it were true, it would not be of force to infer the Conclusion, *viz. That the reading of the Bible ought to be denied to the Vulgar.*

First, It is notoriously false, That *all the unhappy Divisions among Christians take their rise, either ONLT or CHIEFLY from the free permitting of the Bible among the Multitude.* This will be evident by considering these five things.

1. That there were *Divisions* among the *Ancient Guides* or *Pastors* of the Church.
2. That there have been, and still are *Divisions*, yea as many, among the *Learned* of the Church of Rome, as among the *Protestants*.
3. That the *Learned Romanists* are divided among themselves, in all those Points in which they are divided from *Protestants*.
4. That those very pernicious Doctrines and Practices, which the Representer himself mentions, are derived from the *Learned* ; and especially from the *Learned* of the Church of Rome. And therefore,
5. That the *Divisions* among the *Vulgar*, for the most part, are not owing to themselves, but to the *Learned*.

1. There were *Divisions* among the ancient *Guides* and *Pastors* of the *Christian Church* ; and in matters of as great moment, as those are in which the *Protestants* are divided. As between St. *Ireneus* and *Victor*, St. *Cyprian* and *Stephen*, St. *Chrysostom* and *Theophilus*, St. *Jerom* and

and *Ruffinus*, *St. Cyril* and *Theodore*, the Bishops of the Council of *Nice*, and those also of *Sardica*, &c. I wish those Divisions, and many other among the ancient Bishops were not too well known to need any Proof. Now can the *Representer* say, That these Divisions sprang from permitting the Bible to the Multitude? I trow not.

2. There have been, and still are Divisions, yea as many, among the *Learned* of the *Church of Rome*, as among the *Protestants*. Almost every *Schoolman* is the Head of a *Seet*; and the Controversies between the *Lutherans* and the *Calvinists* are not so many, as between the *Thomists* and the *Scotists*. The Dissentions between the Regular and Secular Priests, have lasted already for some Ages, and are likely still to continue; so many several Orders, so many *Seets* in Religion, you may find among the Regulars; and the *Remonstrants*, and *Anti-monstrants*, will as soon unite, as the *Dominicans* with the *Jesuits* or the *Franciscans*. Yea the *Popes themselves* (the Centre of their Unity) are often divided among themselves, and their Definitions plainly contradictory one to another. Witness Pope *Gregory I.* and Pope *Boniface III.* The former condemn'd the Title of *Universal Bishop*, as abominable and Antichristian (z), the later ambitiously affected and obtain'd it from the Tyrant *Phocas* (a). Pope *Innocent I.* held the Eucharist was necessary for Infants (b). Pope *Pius IV.* denounced an Anathema against those that held it (c). And certainly neither do these Divisions take their Rise from the reading of the Bible by the common People.

3. The *Learned Romanists* are divided among themselves in all those Points of Doctrine, in which they are divided from *Protestants*. I shall instance in some, viz. The *Popes* Infallibility and *Universal* Pastorship; his Power over Princes, and Dominion in Temporals; the

Canon.

(z) Lib. 4.
Epist. 32, 33.
35, 38.
(a) Plat. in
vit. Bonifacii
III. Sabellic.
Ennead. 8. l. 6.
(b) Aug. Contr.
duas Epist.
Pelag. l. 2. c. 4.
Binii Concil.
Tom. 1. p. 769.
(c) Conc. Trid.
Sess. 21. Can. 4.

Canon of Scripture, and Traditions of the Church; the Sacrifice of the Mass, and Communion in one kind; the Worship of Images, and Invocation of Saints; the Doctrines of Purgatory and Indulgences; to which I shall add but one more, *viz.* Transubstantiation: Tho they seem pretty well agreed to burn or hang those that deny it, yet there is not one question about it, in which they are at an agreement among themselves. To borrow the Words of a learned Bishop of the Church of Ireland. No sooner, says he, *was this fatal Sentence given* (he means the Definition of Transubstantiation in the Lateran Council) *but as if Pandora's Box had been newly set wide open, whole swarms of noisom Questions and Debates did fill the Schools.* Then it began to be disputed by what means this Change comes; whether by the Benediction of the Elements, or by the repetition of those Words of Christ, *THIS IS MY BODY?* Then was the Question started, *what the demonstrative Pronoun HOC signifies in these Words, THIS IS MY BODY?* Whether this thing, or this Substance, or this Bread, or this Body, or this Meat, or these Accidents, or that which is contain'd under these Species, or this Individuum vagum, or lastly (which seems stranger than all the rest) this nothing? &c. Then it began to be argued, whether the Elements were annihilated? Whether the Matter and Form of them being destroyed, their Essence did yet remain? Or the Essence being converted, the Existence remain'd? — Then the Schoolmen began to wrangle, what manner of Change this was? Whether a material Change, or a formal Change, or a Change of the whole Substance both Matter and Form? And if it were a Conversion of the whole Substance; then whether it was by way of Production or by Addition? &c. (d). This is only a short taste of what the Reader may find in the Book quoted in the Margin.

(d) Bp. Bramh.
Answ. to the
Epist. of M. de
la Miliere.

Nor do they only quarrel about the Manner, but some of their greatest Men do not believe, and others plainly deny the Article it self; as any one may see, who will but take the pains to consult the learned Preface to a Discourse of the Holy Eucharist, in the two great Points, &c. and a Treatise written by an Author of the Communion of the Church of Rome touching *Transubstantiation*. It is probable, that if all the Disputes, upon all Points controverted among *Protestants*, were put together, they would not amount to a greater number than those of the *Papists*, in this one Article.

To conclude this: Let any *Learned Romanist* tell me, what his Judgment is, in any one Point controverted between them and us, and I will engage, upon short warning, to produce another *Learned Romanist*, who shall contradict him. And, are not Men so entirely united in Judgment among themselves, excellently qualified to upbraid *Protestants* with their Divisions!

4. In that he says, *To such Readers as St. Peter calls Unwary and Ignorant, Arianism may be as obvious in this Book as Christ's Divinity*: It is a sign that he expected no other than such *unwary and ignorant Readers*. For he must be ignorant indeed in these Matters, who does not know, That not the *Ignorant*, but the *Learned*; not the *Laiety*, but the *Clergy*, were the Persons to whom *Arianism* was in this Book so obvious; Witness the Councils of *Sirmium*, of *Milan* and *Ariminum*. I need not tell him, That one or two of the Bishops of Rome, either grossly dissembled, or *Arianism* was for a time, more obvious to them in this Book, than *Christ's Divinity*.

And whereas he says, That *when such an one (viz. one that is Unwary and Ignorant) undertakes the interpreting of this Book, tis a hazard, whether in the end he comes*
out

out Quaker, Anabaptist, Presbyterian, Independent, Muggletonian, Socinian, or Atheist. He had spoken nearer the Truth, if he had said, When such an one takes this Book as interpreted to him by a Popish Priest or Jesuit, in the disguise of a Quaker, Anabaptist, &c. We know who have been employ'd to sow and foment Divisions among us, to draw our People into separated Meetings, upon the pretence of a more pure and spiritual way of Worship. We can tell him of great numbers instructed in Handy-craft Trades, trained up to dispute, one for Presbytery, another for Independency, a third for Anabaptism, sent over hither by order from Rome; so that when the deluded People have thought they had heard a *gifted Tradesman*, they have heard a *Romish Priest* in that disguise. We can acquaint him with those who have been detected exercising their Talents, in several sorts of Meetings.

But that which follows is most surprising: That it is a venture, whether Cruelty, cutting of Throats, Oppression, Tyranny, dethroning of Kings, murder of Princes, shall not with him (*viz.* the ignorant Reader) become a necessary Duty, and a true serving of the Lord. This, I say, is most surprising; and doubtless, he rubb'd his forehead hard, before he wrote it, since he knows, That all these have, for some hundreds of Years, been taught and practised by the greatest Men of his own Church; and therefore it is not a venture, but beyond all *perak-venture*, that when Place and Time serve, they will be so again. He well knows what the great Cardinals Bellarmine, Baronius, Perron, &c. What the Learned Jesuits, Suarez, Lessius, Azorius, &c. What his own Country-men, Cardinal Allen, Father Parsons, Creswell, &c. have written for the *deposing and murdering of Kings*. He knows what Pope Gregory VII, Gregory IX, Innocent

Innocent III, Innocent IV, Boniface VIII, Paul III, Pius V, Sixtus V, Gregory XIII, have not only taught, but acted in pursuance of these Doctrines. He knows there was a *Holy League* among those who had not the Bible in their Banners, as well as a *Solemn League and Covenant* among those who had. And he knows, or (at least) may soon know, if he please, That the chief Weapons of the Rebellion in Forty two, were fetch'd from *Rome*; I mean, the Arguments by which the People were stirred up to rebel, were transcribed from Popish Writers, particularly from *Mariana* and *Parsons*, out of whom he may see in some Books then published, whole leaves together translated. And therefore,

5. The Divisions among the *Vulgar*, are very rarely in comparison owing to themselves; they are not to be imputed to the different Senses, which they themselves in their private reading put upon the Bible, but (for the most part) to the different Senses they receive of it from their Teachers. For the truth of which, I appeal to History, and to the common Observation of Mankind. If the Representer be not satisfied with this, I desire him to answer but this one Question: Whence came it to pass, that so many of the *Vulgar* in *England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, &c.* divided themselves from the Church of *Rome*, before they had the Bible in a Language they understood? That Division could not proceed from their reading of the Bible, which was made before they had ever read it. I cannot imagine what Answer he can give, but that they followed their Leaders, *Wickliff, Luther, Zuinglius, &c.* who first dividing from the Church of *Rome*, drew the People after them. The Division therefore took its Rise from the *Learned*, and from them descended to the *Ignorant*.

G

The

(e) Confil. de
Rom. Ecclef.
ftabiliend. a-
pud Vergeri-
um, Tom. I.

The *Trent* Fathers therefore were miserably miftaken, in denying the Bible to the Laity only; they fhould have decreed in the firft place, that no Clergyman fhould be fuffer'd to read it, (that there might be like People, like Prielt). And this the more prudent Bifhops at *Bononia* were aware of, when they advifed *Julius III*, not to permit any Mortal to read more of the *Goffel*, than that little which is contained in the *Mafs* (e). I need fay no more to expofe the Falfhood of this Affertion, That the Divifions among Chriftians, proceed *folely* or *chiefly* from permitting the Bible among the *Vulgar*. But,

2. If this were true, yet it would not be a fufficient Reason for denying the reading of the Bible to the *Vulgar*. For if it were fo now, it would have been fo heretofore; it would have been fo in the early Ages of the Chriftian Church, when there were as many Sects and Hereties as there are now: It would have been fo in the Time of the Apoftles, for in almoft every Church planted by them, Divifions prefently fprang up: It would have been fo in the Jewifh Church, for they had their Sects as well as the Chriftians; yea, it would have been fo from the very beginning, when the Scripture was firft publish'd.

But when the Bible was firft written, had this been a fufficient Reason, would God have caufed it to be written in the *Vulgar* Language of that People to whom it was given, and laid his Command upon all without diftinction, to apply themfelves to the ftudy of it. And in the fucceeding Ages of the Jewifh Church, yea after the Babylonian Captivity (tho fome new Sects then fprang up among them) fo far was it from being thought a Reason, why they fhould not read the Law, that by the Laws of that Nation, every Man was obliged

obliged to write a Copy of the Law for himself, with his own hand. And if the Case had been alter'd in the days of our Saviour, would he not have told us? Would he never have reprov'd the *prying Multitude*, (as the Representer is pleas'd to complement the People) for reading the Law and the Prophets? Nay, would he have put them upon the reading of them, as he plainly does, as oft as in his Discourses to the People, he quotes them for the proof of what he says. And had his Apostles after him thought this a fit Expedient, either for the Prevention or Cure of Divisions, when they wrote their Epistles to those Churches in which Divisions were already sown, (as the Churches of *Corinth* and *Colosse*) would they have address'd them to *all* without exception, and exhorted *all*, that *the Word of God dwell in them richly*? And when, in succeeding Ages, the Church was miserably rent with Schisms, do any of the Fathers prescribe this Remedy? Nay, tho *St. Jerome*, *St. Austin*, *St. Chrysostom*, &c. sadly complain of the *abuse* of Scripture by Hereticks, yet do they not exhort all sorts of Persons to read it? In a word, The Church of *Rome* it self, did not think this a fit Expedient, till it was so changed from what it was in the beginning, that if *St. Peter*, and *St. Paul* should have been rais'd again from the Dead, they would not have own'd it for that Church which they at first planted. I have, I think, said more than enough, to the first Mischief.

II. The second (which he gives as the main Reason, why the *Holy Scripture* is not allow'd to the *Vulgar* of his Church without exception) is this: That if this be allow'd, there will be as many different Bibles among them, as there are Heads (f): that is, The words of the Bible will be understood by them, in as many different senses as there are Men: For he thus explains himself;

(f) Chap. 3.
p. 54.

(s) P. 54.

Tho the Book of the Scriptures does certainly contain the Word of God, yet to every Christian that reads it, 'tis the Sense and Meaning, and not the Letter, is more properly the Word of God. Now do You but reflect in how many different Senses the Letter of the Bible is understood, and so many different Bibles will you find multiply'd by your Followers: And tell me, upon examination, whether this be much fewer than Heads (g)? So wonderfully pleased is he with this Conceit, that he presently falls into a fit of Raillery. Don't you think there would be a pretty variety of Bibles? there would be this Man's Bible, and that Man's Bible; such an one's Bible, and such an one's Bible; infinite number of Bibles. But I fear I shall quickly spoil his mirth.

I shall not insist upon it; That every difference in sense, makes not a difference of Bibles, as long as there is an agreement in all things material, in those Points, which by all the differing Parties are acknowledged sufficient to Salvation. I need not beg this, because they themselves are forc'd to assert it in their own defence: For they acknowledg, that the Vulgar Latin Translation of the Bible, differs in many places from the Original; That before Pope Clement's Edition, there were many various Readings: That the Bibles set forth by Sixtus and Clement, are different each from other in many Places; and yet they say, they are not to be reckoned different Bibles, because they do not differ in any thing material to the Faith.

(h) Ibid.

This being premised, I return to his Argument, which in short is this: *If the Holy Scriptures should be generally allow'd to the Vulgar, without exception, they will every one understand them in a different sense (h).* Therefore they ought not to be thus allow'd.

Now

Now in that he says *generally*, and *without exception*, He supposes, That if they be allow'd to the Vulgar, not *generally*, but *with an Exception*, they to whom they are so allow'd, will not make them so many different Bibles: From whence it plainly follows; That if they should be allow'd to *all*, *without exception*, yet many of that *all*, will understand them in the same sense; which overthrows his *universal Conclusion*, *viz. That there will be as many different Bibles as Heads*. But I pass this; Nor shall I stay to shew; First, That the Antecedent is notoriously untrue. Secondly, That if it were true, yet the same Mischief will follow, if the Vulgar be taught the Bible by their Pastors, (as he says they are in the Church of *Rome*) because they may put as many different Interpretations upon their words, as upon the words of the Bible. But shall content my self to return these three things in answer to the Argument, which will sufficiently expose its absurdity.

First; That it is of equal force against the reading of the Bible by the *Learned*, yea, of much greater. The Reason is plain, because the *Learned* are those especially, who expound the Bible to different Senses. The most zealous *Papist*, if he please to follow the *Representative's Direction*, shall find this as evident as *Demonstration*. Let him first ask twenty Lay-men, what is the meaning of such a Text, and write down each Man's sense *at length as he delivers it*, in one Column; Then let him consult twenty of the most learned *Popish Commentators*, upon the same Text, and write down what each of them says in another; then let him compare all the Lay-men senses together, and observe all the differences that are between them: Let him then compare all the *Learned Commentators* senses together, and observe likewise all the Differences between them; then let

let him compare the Differences between the *Vulgar*, with those between the *Learned*, and if he find not the former fewer and less material than the later, I shall own that I am mistaken.

I add; That if the Understanding some places of Scripture in a different sense, makes different Bibles, then St. *Cyprian* and St. *Stephen*, St. *Austin* and St. *Jerome*, St. *Cyril* and *Theodoret*, yea, all the Learned Fathers of the Primitive Church, had different Bibles; and therefore (if this Argument signify any thing) ought not to have been suffered to read the Scripture. The absurdity of which will yet be more manifest, because,

Secondly, Where the *Vulgar* are not permitted to read the Bible, there are as many *different Bibles* (in the Representer's sense) as where they are: Even in the Church of *Rome*, there are as many, I may truly say, many more than among the *Protestants*. The *Thomists* have one Bible, the *Scotists* another; the *Franciscans* one, the *Dominicans* another; the *Jesuits* one, the *Jansenists* another: The *Scotists* Bible teaches, that Original Sin, is nothing but the Privation of Original Righteousness; the *Thomists* Bible teaches, it is more: The *Franciscans* find in their Bible the immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin; the *Dominicans* find no such Matter in theirs: The *Jansenists* Bible gives to God alone the praise of Converting Grace; the *Jesuits* Bible gives it to God, and themselves too. In many of their Bibles, Transubstantiation is as legible, as these words, *This is my Body*; in many others, no such Doctrine appears.

Yea, the very Popes themselves (in spite of their Infallibility) have Bibles not only *different*, but plainly *contradictory*. Pope Gregory's I. Bible, taught him, that

that the Emperor was his Lord; Pope *Gregory's VII.* that the Emperor was his Vassal. Yea, some of their Bibles have taught them to be downright Hereticks; so did Pope *Honorius's*, and *John's XXIII.* And which is yet worse, not only their Popes, but their Councils too, have had *different Bibles*, as might be shew'd at large, if it were needful. Yea if that be true which a great Cardinal has affirmed; That the Precepts of Christ may be changed by the Church, and at one time be interpreted to this sense, and at another time to that *(i)*. Then the Church of *Rome* may, every Age or every year, have a different Bible.

(i) Card. Cusan. Epist. 2. de usu Communionis ad Bohem.

And whereas the *Representer* grants, that the Protestants have all the same Bible in their *hands*, tho it be *different* in their *Heads*; Those of the Church of *Rome* have in their *Hands* in one Age one Bible; in another Age, another. In this and the Age next foregoing, the Books of the *Maccabees* have been part of the Bible in their Hands, which certainly were not so in the Age of *Gregory* the Great *(k)*.

(k) Greg. Moral. Expof. in Job. l. 19. c. 17.

I further add, That their agreement about the sense of the Council of *Trent*, is as little, as about the sense of the Scripture. *Soto's* Council of *Trent*, and *Catharinus's* Council of *Trent*; *Bellarmin's* Council of *Trent*, and the Bishop of *Meaux's* Council of *Trent*, are so far from being the *same*, that they are in many things directly *opposite*. And therefore,

3. To retort the Argument; *How shamefully does the Representer delude the poor Vulgar, in perswading them, that tho they do not read the Bible, yet the very same Word of God is delivered to them by their Teachers; whereas when it comes to be examined, it is not the Word of God, but their Teachers Imaginations they are guided by. To convince him of this by his own experiment. Let him take all*

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the different senses their Teachers put upon the Scripture, and carry them to any Licenser of his own Church in order to be printed and published as the Word of God, and Rule of Faith, and see if he can find any who will set them forward with an Imprimatur. What an Unchristian Imposture is it then, to let so many poor Souls go on with a secure confidence of following the Word of God, when what they follow is nothing better than the Imaginations and Dreams of their Priests! Let now the Representer judg, to whose shame the Droll is exposed, and if he please, let him still go on to upbraid the Protestants with their different Bibles.

Mischief III. III. But the Representer will go farther with us. For 'tis not only thus, says he, in several People, but even the same Person many times has the faculty of multiplying the Word of God. For how many are there to be found among the Vulgar, who according to their different humours, as their Interest changes, according to the different Impressions they receive from Confidants, especially such as have gained their good Opinion, espouse different Doctrines and Perswasions, and run thorough as many Sects, as there are Divisions in the Nation? And yet in all their windings, they follow (as they imagine) the Scripture.—Don't you see how to these same Persons the Word of God is not always the same? It alters according to Seasons and Times, and it was one Word of God directed them the last year, another this, &c.

Now suppose all this to be true of many of the Vulgar, is it not also as true of many of the Learned? yea of many of the most Learned in the Church of Rome? May it not as truly be said, how many may be found among your Bishops, Cardinals and Popes, who according to their different humours, as their Interest changes, espouse different Doctrines and Perswasions? Witness in elder times Pope Liberius and Vigilius, who were either
Here-

Hereticks or Catholicks, as their Interest changed. And for later times, witness the Cardinal of *Cusa*; who, one while more zealous than he, for the Authority of a General Council above the Pope? But when he expected to be made a Cardinal, who more zealous for the contrary Doctrine? Upon which *Richerius* his Words are observable: By this, saith he, we are given to know, that very many who have defended the Truth in a state of Poverty, have deserted the same out of hope of Dignities, and a more plentiful Fortune; and especially out of an ambition of being made Cardinals (l). Witness *Aeneas Sylvius*, who vehemently opposed that Doctrine, when he was Pope, which he had before as vehemently maintained, when he was Clerk to the Council of *Basil*. And that it was interest that gave him this new Light, not I, but *Richerius* and *Maimbourg* plainly assert (m). Yea the Pope himself in his Bull of Retraction, says in effect as much; for speaking of the Disputes between him and *Juliano* Cardinal of *St. Angelo*, he confesses the Doctrine he forsook was the ancient, and that he embraced was new (n). Witness the Cardinal of *Lorrain*: Does not he himself confess, that his Interest being turn'd, he turned with it (o)? Was not his Perswasion different, according to the different Impressions he received from the Pope and the Queen of *France*? When he first came to *Trent*, how contrary his Sentiments in several Points were to those he had afterward, when the State of affairs in *France* was altered, and he had been caressed by the Pope, and his Holiness had gain'd his good Opinion, may sufficiently appear by comparing the places quoted in the Margin (p).

It's too well known to need to be mentioned, how that *Gardiner*, *Bonner*, and all the Popish Bishops (Fiscer only excepted) espoused different Doctrines and

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Per-

(l) Hist. Concil. general. l. 3. p. 479.

(m) Richer. Hist. Concil. general. l. 4. parte. 1. c. 6. Maimb. Prolog. Of the Church of Rome. c. 25. p. 338.

(n) Tuebamur antiquam sententiam, ille novam defendebat.

(o) Hist. of the Council of Trent. l. 8. p. 767.

(p) Hist. of the Council of Trent. ps. 659, 692, 703, 704, 712, 733, 743, 744, 767, 782, 813.

Perswasions, as their *Interests changed*, and according to the *different Impressions* they received, either from the King or the Pope.

And don't you now see, how to these same Bishops, Cardinals and Popes the Word of God was not always the same, but alter'd according to Seasons and Times? That it was one Word of God that directed *Aeneas Sylvius*, while he was Secretary to the Council of *Basil*, another, while he was Pope. That in King *Henry VIII's* and King *Edward VI's* Reigns, the King's Supremacy in Ecclesiastical Affairs, was in *Gardiner's* and *Bonner's* Bibles: in Queen *Marie's* Reign, the Pope's was found instead of the King's. The Conclusion hence is unavoidable; That if all Men are to be denied the reading of the holy Scriptures, who according to their *different Humours*, as their *Interest changes*, espouse different *Doctrines* and *Persuasions*, they must be denied to many more than the *Vulgar*, unless their Bishops, Cardinals and Popes are to be placed in that rank.

S E C T. III.

In the next place the *Representer* gives us his Reasons, why the *Vulgar* so differ in the sense of the Bible which are two; one of them imply'd, the other express'd. That which is imply'd is the *Obscurity* of the Scripture; That which is express'd is, *the setting up every Man's private Reason to be Judge of Scripture* (q).

(q) Chap. 9.
p. 58.

Reason I. I. The Obscurity of the Scripture. For if it be so plain and easy, says he, how comes it there is so little agreement in the understanding it?

When the Protestants affirm, that the Scripture is plain and easie, they mean it is so to those only who read it with honest Hearts, who sincerely desire to know the

the Truth, and to direct their Lives answerable to it; and they mean, that it's so, not simply in all things, but in all things necessary to Salvation. And when they affirm this, they affirm no more than St. *Austin* did: *Believe me*, saith he, *whatsoever is in those Scriptures*, (speaking of the Scriptures of the old Testament, which are more obscure than those of the new) *it is high and Divine, they contain nothing but what is true, and that Doctrine which is most fit for the repairing and restoring of Souls, and so disposed, that there is no Man, but may draw thence that which is sufficient for him, provided he comes devoutly and piously affected, as true Religion requires* (r). They affirm no more than what St. *Chrysostom* did; for he says, *That all things necessary are manifest* (s). They affirm no more than what the Bishop of Rome did formerly. For the Holy

Scripture, saith Pope Gregory, (as I find him quoted by the Authors of the Preface of the Mons Testament) *is as a great River, which runs always, and which will run to the end of the World. The little Children and the Men of full Stature, the strong and the weak, do there find that living Water that springs up even to Heaven. It offers it self to all, and it suits it self to all. It hath a simplicity that abases it self to the most simple Souls, and a height that exercises and raises the most lofty* †.

Nay they say no more than what many learned Romanists of this present Age have said. The Bishop of Venice, speaking of the new Testament, says, *The Son of God hath in it taken care to teach us CLEARLY and DISTINCTLY, our whole Duty to him, as well as our whole Duty to our Neighbour and our selves. This is*

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that

(r) Quicquid est, mihi crede, in Scripturis illis, altum & divinum est: inest omnino veritas, & reficiendis instaurandisq; animis accommodatissima disciplina: & plane ita modificata, ut nemo inde haurire non possit, quod sibi satis est, si modo ad hauriendum devotè ac piè, ut vera Religio poscit, accedat. De utilitate credendi, c. 6.

(s) Πάντα τὰ ἀναγκαῖα δὴ αὐτῶν. Hom. 3. in 2. ad Thess.

† P. 9.

(t) Preface of
Mr. Arnaud.

(u) De la
Lect de l'Ecri-
ture sainte l. 2.
c. 6.

that which the Gospels contain; The Epistles of the Apostles are a Comment upon it, and an Explication more enlarged and distinct, which leave not any thing in the Christian Life we ought to live upon Earth, unexplain'd (t). And Mr. Arnaud says, That the holy Fathers have noted, that one of those things which shew the Divinity of the holy Scriptures, and in which they excel all the Writings of Men, is this, That they are equally accommodated to the Learned and the Ignorant, to little Children and to grown Men, to the weak and to the perfect, to the shallow and the more profound Wits (u).

But the Representer asks; If the Scripture be so plain and easy, how comes it there is so little agreement in the understanding it? How are there so many different and contrary Divisions, Sects and Perswasions in this one Nation? How comes it, that even in the essentials of Christianity, concerning the Trinity &c. there has been, and at present is so great diversity among those that read the Scripture? I answer

1. That the agreement among Protestants is not so little as he pretends: That the Reformed Churches agree in all essential Points of Faith, any Man may be satisfied, who will take the pains to read over the Harmony of their Confessions. But,

2. Let the Disagreement be more or less, it proceeds not from the Obscurity of the Scriptures. This is evident, because the Disagreement among those that read the Scripture, is as great in those things that are most plainly, as in those that are more obscurely delivered. Can any thing be more plain, than these words of Christ concerning the Cup, Drink ye all of it (w)? Or those of St. Paul, in which he applies this Drinking to the Lay-Corinthians (x)? Suppose it was Christ's Intention, that the Laity should partake of the Cup, as well as the Bread; would not those

(w) Mat. 26.

27.

(x) 1 Cor. 11.
25.

those Men, who do not see it in these words, in whatsoever Words he had express'd it, have found out another meaning? It's plain then, that it is not the obscurity of the Text, from whence this diversity of Interpretation arises. But.

2. To gratify the *Representer*, I'll plainly tell him what it is. 1. In those who have different Lusts and Interests to serve, 'tis their different Lusts and Interests with which the Scriptures must be forced to comply. 2. In those who are sincere, and do not profess contrary to their Belief, it is the different Prejudice or Principle they are possess'd with. Tho' the Scripture speaks never so plainly against the Doctrine and Worship of such a sort of Men, yet if it be inconsistent with that which they have laid for the main Principle and Foundation of their Faith, they can never persuade themselves that the Words are to be taken according to the most common and obvious sense, but must find out some other meaning for them. For instance: It is a Principle with the Romanists that their Church cannot err: Let therefore Scripture be never so express against the Worship of Images, against Transubstantiation, against Communion in one kind, against the Propitiatory Sacrifice of the Mass, against Prayer in an unknown Tongue, yet they must of necessity conclude, that it does not mean what it seems to say, because if it should, it unavoidably follows, that their Church hath grossly err'd, which according to their Principle is as impossible, as that the Truth and Promise of God should fail. And that it is indeed this Principle, & not the Obscurity of the Scripture, that makes the difference in many Texts between them and us, is evident enough by this consideration, *viz.* That they cannot see that in the plainest words, that is contrary to their Principle; whereas in words not only
obscure,

obscure, but most remote and impertinent, they can see that which is agreeable thereto.

1. They cannot see that in the plainest words, that is contrary to their Principle. If to worship an Image be unlawful, their Church hath err'd ; therefore they cannot see it is forbid in the Second Commandment; tho it is hard to conceive that other Words can be used more full to that purpose. For be it *graven Image*, or *graven Thing*, or *Idol* that is forbidden, it matters not ; since the *Similitude* or *Likeness* of any thing in Heaven above, or in the Earth beneath, &c. is forbidden also.

2. But see now, how they can find that in the most remote and impertinent Text, that is agreeable to their Principle. Would you have a Scripture for the Worship of Images ; Bellarmine gives you *Mat. 5. 34, 35. Swear not by the Heaven, for it is God's Throne, nor by the Earth, for it is his Footstool* (y). If you think this not clear enough, take *2 Tim. 3. 15. Thou hast known the holy Scriptures from a Child* (z). The Scriptures are called *Holy Scriptures*, therefore the Images of Christ and his Saints are to be worship'd. Here's a Demonstration as bright as Midnight. He must be stark blind, or shut his Eyes hard, who can avoid its light. I omit many other Instances which are ready at hand. By these now mention'd, it's manifest enough, that Mens Disagreement about the Sense of Scripture, doth not proceed from its obscurity, but from the different Principles or Prejudices they are prepossess'd with. Better would it be for the Church of *Rome*, were it more obscure in many Points than it is : And were it but as clear for them, as it is against them, they would not then complain of its Obscurity, or prohibit the Vulgar the reading of it.

II. But the Protestants are for setting up every Man's private Reason to be Judge of Scripture. What ? to be
Judg

(y) De Imagin. Sancto-
rum l. 2. c. 12.

(z) Ibid.

Judge of what in Scripture ought to be received, and what rejected, as the Socinians do? This is a very disingenuous *Misrepresentation*. Much more remote from Truth is it, That *they are far worse in this, than the rankest Socinian in the World* (a). The Protestant, he very well knows, being satisfied by his Reason concerning the divine Authority of the Scripture, he firmly assents to whatsoever he finds delivered in it, tho he be not able to conceive how it should be. He indeed uses his Reason in judging of the sense of Scripture, which he must of necessity do, or else he can have no reason to believe it in a true, rather than a false sense: But having to the best of his understanding found out the meaning of it, he makes neither *common* nor *private* Reason the *Measure* of what is to be received, so as to admit nothing into his Faith, but what he is able fully to understand. Tho he meets with some things which are above his Capacity, yet he does not say as *Socinus*, speaking of Christ's Satisfaction, *If the very word were in Scripture, not once, but often, yet I would not believe it*; but thinks he has the greatest Reason in the World to believe them, because God has deliver'd them. And that some things in Scripture are above his Capacity; this he thinks is so far from being a discouragement, that it is rather a motive to his Faith; for he might be tempted to suspect the Divinity of the Scriptures, if he found nothing in them above the reach of his own little Understanding, either at first to find out, or afterward to comprehend.

And if this be to make *private Reason*, the *Rule* of Scripture, we need not be ashamed to own it. For this is no more than what our Blessed Saviour allowed to private Persons. He frequently appealed to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, but he left it to every man's Reason to judge, whether they were for him or against him.

(a) P. 58.

him. Yea, did he not severely reprove the *promiscuous Multitude*, for not judging even of themselves what was right (b)? For to the Multitude (τοῖς ὄχλοις v. 54.) these words were directed. This is no more than what the Apostles of our Lord have laid as a Duty upon private Christians; St. Paul commands them to *prove all things* (c); and thought the common Christians of the Church of *Corinth* wise enough to *judg what he said* (d): St. John requires them, to *try the Spirits whether they be of God* (e): And can they do this if they may not judg of the sense of the Scripture? This is no more than what St. Chrysostom frequently exhorted the People to, and sharply reproved their neglect of it.

(b) Luk. 12.
57.

(c) 1 Thes. 5.
21.

(d) 1 Cor. 10.
15.

(e) 1 Joh. 4.
1.

Yea, notwithstanding the loud cry they make against *private Reason* and the *private Spirit*, the Roman Clergy themselves are forced to appeal to it. For when to draw Men over from us to them, they produce so many Scriptures, and so many Reasons (such as they are) fetch'd from Scripture; Do they not make every Man's Reason Judg, whether these Scriptures and these Reasons are to the purpose?

If they say, a Man must use his Reason to judg which is the true Church, but having once found it, he must then take the sense of Scripture upon the Church's word: nothing can be said more absurd: Because a Man must judg of the sense of the Scripture, before he can discern which is the true Church; since that can no otherwise be known than by those Characters the Scripture gives of it. Besides, one of their own Marks of the true Church, is the *Holiness of its Doctrine* (f): A Man therefore must know what the Doctrine of a Church is, before he can know it to be a true Church; and how shall a Man know this, but by first examining her Doctrine by Scripture? A Man must therefore know the sense of Scripture,

(f) Bell. de
Notis Eccles.
l. 4. c. 11.

ture, before he can know the true Church. But if it should be granted, that when a Man once knows the true Church, he must then understand the Scripture as the Church does; yet tell me, why he must do so? Is it because he hath Reason, or no Reason, so to do? You will not say, because he hath no Reason, (for you your self give Reasons why he must) And if it be because he hath Reason, he then makes his Reason Judge of the sense of Scripture, as well as the Protestant.

But *Christian Faith*, he says, *is but one*; that's granted. And all *Christians are directed to meet in this ONE Faith, to be of ONE SPIRIT and ONE MIND to say all the same thing*. This is also granted. Now can

you imagine it possible, says he, for all *Christians to concur in the same Belief, while the Scripture being but ONE which they read, their private Judgments give differing and contrary Interpretations of it, and carry them several*

ways (g)? And will it be possible for all *Christians to concur in the same Belief, if the Scriptures be denied to the*

Vulgar? For do not the *private Judgments* of the *Clergy* give as *differing and contrary Interpretations of it, and*

carry them as many several ways? And therefore are there not as many *Divisions* among your selves (as has

been shew'd) as there are among *Protestants*? And is it not ridiculous, so often to insist upon that as a sove-

reign Remedy of *Divisions*, which is so ineffectual, that the Disease is as prevalent, where it is used, as

where it is not?

The Representer may perhaps say, That their *Differences* are not in matters of *Faith*: If not, then neither are ours, since theirs are in matters as considerable as ours are. But the best on't is, if notwithstanding their *Differences* among themselves, they are still of *one Faith*; then the *Protestants* also may be of *one Faith*,

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not

(g) Chap. 9.
P. 58.

not only *among themselves*, but *with them* too, and therefore are no Hereticks; since Protestants differ no more from them, than many of them do one from another.

Tho therefore it be the Duty of Christians to be all of *one Mind*, and to *speak the same things*; and tho I see no reason to question, but God hath afforded such helps in order thereunto, which if they were not wanting to themselves in the use of, they might attain to this *Unity*: Yet we have already seen, that the withholding the Scripture from the *Vulgar* is none of those means; and tho some who will be wiser than God, have thought fit to make trial of it, yet they have hitherto found it unsuccessful. And for those means which God hath vouchsafed, as little Reason have we to expect, that they should by all Christians be faithfully used and applied, and they thereby be brought to this perfect *Unity*, as to expect, that all Men should become sober, and just, and charitable, and devout, which God has made no less their Duty, and for the effecting of which, he hath vouchsafed as powerful means.

But now let us again try, whether this long Harangue be not of equal force, against the reading of the Scripture by the *Learned*, as by the *Vulgar*.

‘ If the different Sects in Religion proceed from the reading of the Scripture by the *Vulgar*, how comes it that there are so many *different* and *contrary Divisions*, *Sects* and *Perswasions* among you *Romanists*? *How* comes it that even in those things, that by the *differing Parties* are reckon’d *Matters of Faith*, there hath been, and at present is, so great *Diversity*? The business is, you suffer every *Learned Man’s private Reason* to be *Judge* of Scripture, which when put to the test, proves in thousands and thousands to be no better than *Passion*, *Prejudice*, *Interest*, *Imagination*, *Guessing*, or *Fancy*.
‘ Don’t

'Don't you find by experience, that there's no Proposal made, but presently the *Learned* are divided about it ? as they were in almost every Question in the Council of *Trent* ; nor could the Controversies be decided by the Fathers, but they were forc'd to make many of their Decrees in such general Terms (for the gratifying of the contending Parties) as might be interpreted to contrary Senses ? Don't you see again, That almost every Scholar's Reason is different, as their Capacity, Parts, Education, Temper, Inclinations, Impressions are different ? That as every one has a Head of his own, so he has generally a Reason, or way of reasoning of his own ? Nay, are not the *Learned* so inconstant even to themselves too, that what is Reason to them at one time, is unreasonable at another ? How then can you permit a thing so slippery, so weak, various, wavering, changeable, inconstant, as you see the private Reason of the Learned is, to be rely'd on by them, as their Guide in expounding of Scripture ? How can you imagine it possible for all Christians to concur in the same Belief, while the *Learned*, who read and expound the Scripture, give differing and contrary interpretations of it ? For as long as the Scripture is no otherwise in their Heads and Hearts, than by the interpretation they make of it, their Faith must necessarily be as various as their Interpretation.

And is not the Story of the *Manna* (which follows) as applicable to the *Learned* ? 'For, was not the taste of the *Manna* as different to the Priests, as it was to the People ? Did it not relish according to that kind of Meat, that was most grateful to every Priest's Palate ? Now if the Priests in *Canaan* had receiv'd a Command of bringing forth that sort of Meat, whose taste should be like that of the *Manna* they ate in the Desert,

'sert, was it possible they should all agree in their Dish?
 ' Since tho the *Manna* was the same they all fed on, yet
 ' the Relish was as different as their Tempers and Pa-
 ' lats. Don't you therefore see, that Men will never
 ' be of *one Spirit*, and *one Mind*, until the reading of
 ' the Scripture be prohibited to the *Learned*? and not
 ' to *some*, but to *all*, his *Holiness*, as *Infallible*, only ex-
 ' cepted? For if it be allow'd to the *Cardinals* (not-
 ' withstanding their Eminences above others) toge-
 ' ther with his *Holiness*, they will never agree in the
 ' sense of it: For I can tell you of many *Cardinals* who
 ' have differ'd from his Holiness, and among themselves
 ' too, about the sense of it. Is it not then as *plain as*
 ' *Demonstration*, that there will be no end of Contro-
 ' versies, as long as the Scriptures are read, by any Man
 ' in the World, besides the Pope? And perhaps not then
 ' neither, for since he is not *infallible* but when he speaks
 ' from his *Chair*, (which seldom happens) at other
 ' times he may chance to contradict himself, and give
 ' one sense of Scripture this Year, another the next. It
 ' were therefore most advisable (could it possibly be
 ' effected) that the Book it self were utterly abolished.

Let not any Man interpret this to the disparagement
 of Learning, since nothing can be more evident, than
 that the Learned have vast Advantages above the rest
 of Mankind, for attaining to the true meaning of the
 more obscure Texts of Scripture; provided they sin-
 cerely search after Truth, and are so humble, so sensi-
 ble of their own liableness to mistake, that they daily
 implore the Divine Assistance: But if they be desti-
 tute of these Qualifications, they are not only as subject
 to err, but to err more dangerously than others.

In the beginning of the 10th Chapter, the *Represen-*
ter talks again at the same impertinent rate; so agree-
 able

able to him is this way of reasoning, that he naturally falls into it, in every Chapter. But the Vanity of it lies so open, that it need not be further exposed. If any Man please to consult the place, I shall leave it to himself to judg, whether it be not every whit as applicable against permitting the Scripture to the Learned as the Vulgar.

But the *Representer* may say, The Church of *Rome* does not allow the Learned to interpret Scripture according to their own private Reason: For the Council of *Trent* has decreed, That no Man presume to interpret Scripture, *contrary to the sense of the Church, or the unanimous consent of the Fathers.*

And has not the Church of *England*, her *Confession of Faith*, contrary to which she allows none of her Members to interpret Scripture? Does she not admit all such Traditional Interpretations as can be derived from the Fountain? And for all such Texts as are obscure and doubtful, does she not direct the Vulgar to consult their Guides? Tho it is true, she does not command them to believe, that *White* is *Black*, or that *Vice* is *Vertue*, if the Priest says that it is. But however, the Church of *Rome* denies them the liberty of interpreting the Scripture in their own sense; it is certain, that they commonly take it; else how comes it, that they give such *different senses* of the *same Scripture*? How comes it, that many of the Learned expound the sixth Chapter of *St. John*, of the sacramental eating of *Christ's* Flesh; and many as learned as they, say, that no such matter is there intended? How comes it, when so many tell us, that these words, *This is my Body*, are so plain for *Transubstantiation*, that he must be quite blind who does not see it? that others, whose sight is as good as theirs, tell us, they are not able to see

see this in them? Do these Learned Men, in their Exposition of the Scripture, give us the sense of the Roman Church, or do they not? If not, they follow their own *private Reason*; if they do, their Church gives contrary senses of Scripture, and is as far from being *one* in this respect, as it is from being *Catholic*.

He confesses, p. 63. That *some of the Protestants, to keep up the Face of the Church, do speculatively contend for Authority and Guides*: But then he says, *In Fact they defeat all these their Pretensions*. How do they in *Fact* defeat them? Because *they own no Authority so great or safe, but it is to be subjected to the controul of every private Examiner*. They own an Authority so great, as to Matters of External Government, as to be subject to the controul of no Man, who lives in Communion with the Church. But he means, an Authority so great, that whatsoever the Church *commands and prescribes to be receiv'd, as the Truth and Faith of Christ, it ought to be received*. But can the Church have no Authority, unless Men are bound to believe, *without examination*, whatsoever she prescribes to be believed? If so, then had she no Authority in our Saviour's and his Apostles days; no, nor for several Ages after them. For if any such Authority had been own'd in the fourth Century, how came it to pass, that after the *Nicene Council*, the *Arian* Heresy spread more than it had done before?

If this be to open a Gate to all the *Fanaticisms and Quakerisms* in the World, 'tis certain the *Protestants* did not first open it, but it was long before open'd by our Blessed Saviour, when he gave this Command to his Disciples; *Call no Man Father upon the Earth, for one is Your Father which is in Heaven; neither be ye called Masters, for one is Your Master, even Christ (h)*. As much as to say, There is none upon Earth, by whose sense a Christian

(h) Mat. 23.
9, 10.

istian is to be absolutely determin'd, his Faith is not to be resolv'd into any Man's Authority.

But by the Creed, all Christians are bound to believe the Holy Catholic Church. Yes, That there is such a Church, and that this Church teaches all Truths necessary to be known: But it is one thing to believe this, another thing to believe as the Church of Rome doth. And tho Protestants never refuse to yield assent to all such Doctrines as the Church truly Catholic hath in all Ages taught; yet they can see no reason to pin their Faith upon the Church of Rome; there being as vast a difference between the Church of Rome and the Church Catholick, as between the Church of York and the Church of England.

But St. Paul, Heb. 13. 17. commands all to obey, and submit to those that are over them. 'Tis true, and I grant, that by those that are over them, he means Ecclesiastical Superiors. But does not the same St. Paul command Children to obey their Parents, and Servants to obey their Masters? Would he therefore have all Children and Servants, to take their Faith upon trust from their Parents and Masters? He also commanded every Soul to be subject to the Higher Powers; and yet I am pretty confident, that his meaning was not, that every Christian should then believe as the Roman Emperor did.

But he commands to obey and submit, not only as to External Government, but as to Truth and Belief. Then those who had Arian Bishops (as a great part of the Church for some time had) were bound to believe, that Christ was not God; and those who had Donatist Bishops, were bound to believe that the Church of Rome was so far from being the Catholick Church, that it was not so much as a Part of it. But how does the Representer prove, That the People ought absolutely to submit

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mit their Faith to those that are over them? because the Apostle says, *v. 7. whose Faith follow.* And does he not say, *Chap. 6. 12. Be ye Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises?* Are we therefore bound to believe, as every deceased Christian hath believed? In both places the Apostle speaks of Christians departed this Life: in the later of Christians indifferently, in the former of Christian Bishops; And the words should be render'd, *Remember them which have had the Rule over You, which have spoken to You the Word of God* (such, for instance, as *James Bishop of Jerusalem*, who had witness'd the Faith by his Death) *whose Faith follow.* And the meaning is this; Imitate them in their Constancy and Perseverance in the Christian Profession and Practice, notwithstanding all the Persecutions you meet with in the World.

The *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, 1 Tim. 3. 15. may relate either to *Timothy* himself, or to that Summary of Christian Doctrine that follows. But suppose it relate to the Church, that particular Church was primarily meant, in which *Timothy* was directed how to behave himself; and I think no *Romanist* says, That a Man is bound to believe as every particular Church believes.

The words of Christ, *Matth. 18. 17. (If he hear not the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen Man, and a Publican)* are also impertinent, because he speaks there, not of Matters of Faith, but of Fact, and directs what course is to be taken for the ending of private Quarrels between Man and Man; tho had he spoken of Matters of Faith, they would not have been to the purpose; because by the Church, can be meant no other than that particular Church, of which the offending Brother was a Member. I need say no more, to shew how unconvincing those Reasons are, by which he would persuade

us to abandon our Reason, and to take the sense of Scripture upon trust from his Church.

CHAP. IV.

I Proceed now to the fourth and last Head, *viz.* The *false Constructions* (as the *Representer* calls them) which the *Protestants* make of this Practice of the Church of Rome, or the *wrong Inferences* they deduce from it. Which are these three;

1. That the Vulgar Papists are deprived of the Word of God.
2. That they take up all their Belief upon trust.
3. That the Reason why they are not permitted to read the Bible, is for fear, lest they should discover the Errors of their Religion.

Whether these are *Misconstructions*, or no, I shall leave the impartial Reader to judg, after I shall have consider'd those Reasons by which he endeavours to prove that they are so.

SECT. I.

The first Protestant Inference is: That the Vulgar Papists are deprived of the Word of God, of the Food of their Souls (i). To prevent Cavils and Evasions, I premise this: The Protestant does not say, that the Vulgar Papists have nothing of the Scripture allow'd them. He very well knows, that some shreds of it are now and then given them in Sermons, and some small parcels in their Catechisms, and Manuals of Devotion. But what then? Will it hence follow,

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that

that it is false to say, they are deprived of the Scripture? Will not every Man say, That he is deprived of his Father's Will, who is allowed no more than the sight of here and there a Line transcrib'd from it? Or that a Man's Inheritance is detain'd from him, who has no more than a small Pension given him out of it?

(C) P. 45.

One may a little wonder, that this should be reckon'd a *false Inference*. What! are they not depriv'd of the *Word of God*, who are not suffer'd to *read it*, or so much as to *have it* in a Language they understand? No, says the *Representer*; *The Vulgar of our Communion have more of this Holy Food, than those of any other Perswasion whatsoever (k)*. This is yet more wonderful, That they should not be permitted to *have it*; and yet that they should *have more of it*, than those who have the *whole of it* in their Hands, and daily read it. How shall we unriddle this? Why, *They are taught it by their Pastors*. Be it so; Does it thence follow, that they have *more of it* than those of other Perswasions, who are taught it by their Pastors as well as they? For whereas he presently suggests, That the Protestants are for *leaving their Pastors, that they may teach themselves*: that's a Calumny. Tho the Protestants read the Scriptures themselves, yet they do not reject their Pastors; They do not think, the use of the one does render the other needless now, any more than it did in the first Ages of the Christian Church, when they both went together, and were both thought necessary. But that they who are taught it by their Pastors *only*, should have *more of it* than those who are both taught it by them, and have the whole of it in their own possession, is as true, as that a *part* is more than the *whole*.

But the *Representer* will say; Their *Pastors* teach them all that is necessary for them to know. How shall the

the Vulgar know this? We can tell them of Pastors who have concealed from their People some of the most necessary Points of the Christian Faith; but I need not name them to the *Representer*. But how are the People assur'd, that what they teach them, is indeed the Word of God, and not their own Inventions, when they are not suffered to examine it? As it was foretold that *false Teachers* should arise, so every Age since hath seen that Prediction verified; and for this Reason St. *John* exhorts Vulgar Christians, as well as others, to bring their Teachers Doctrines to the Trial (*l*). Is it necessary that every one that is *commission'd to teach*, should be so sincere, as to deliver nothing but what he believes to be the Faith of *Christ*? The Bishop of *Minor* in the Council of *Trent* thought otherwise, he was afraid there might be many Priests who were real Infidels (*m*). And if the *Representer* be not satisfied with this, we can produce those in this very Age, who have taught that as a necessary Article of Faith, which they were so far from believing *necessary*, that they could not persuade themselves it was *true*.

(*l*) 1 Joh. 4. 1.

(*m*) Hist. of the
Council of Trent,
l. 2. p. 241.

But if the Priest be *honest*, is he also *infallible*? This the *Representer* must suppose, or else he reasons at an absurd rate: For thus he argues; Was *Mary Magdalen* deprived of the Word of God, who placed at her Saviour's Feet, heard it from his own most sacred Mouth? Were those People deprived of the Word of God, to whom the Apostles were sent to preach, for those several Years, before any of the Gospel was in writing? It is not *writing*, we know, that makes it the Word of God, for all that Word of God that is now *written*, was once *unwritten*. But pray Sir tell me; Is every thing taught by a Priest of the Church of *Rome*, as certainly the Word of God, as that which was taught by our Blessed Saviour, and his Apostles? Is every Pa-

rish Priest at length become *Infallible*? If so, what a shame is it that any Controversies are left among your selves, when every Parish affords an *infallible Interpreter* of Scripture? If not, then they may teach that for the Word of God, which is nothing less. However, all that we contend for, is, That the Vulgar may be suffer'd to read that Word which *Mary* heard, for that she heard was the same that is now written; and had it been then written from Christ's Mouth, can any Man be so senseless as to imagine, that after he had done speaking, he would have forbidden her, under severe Penalties to read it?

But let us now suppose, That every *Roman* Teacher is both *able* and *sincere*; will it hence follow, that the People may not read the Scriptures? Had *St. Luke* thought so, he would never have commended the *Bereans* for *searching the Scriptures, whether those things that were spoken by St. Paul were so* (n). Had *St. Paul* himself thought so, would he have proved what he said by Scripture? (for in doing so, he put his Hearers upon the searching it) and thereby taught all succeeding Pastors what they ought to do? To which purpose the words of *Origen* are observable (o); If such and so great an Apostle, did not suppose his Authority sufficient Warrant to his Sayings, unless he made it appear, that what he says is written in the Law and the Prophets, how much more ought we little Ones observe this, that we do not bring forth ours, but the Sentences of the Holy Spirit? Now I presume it will not be denied, but *St. Paul* was as faithful and able a Teacher as any in the Church of *Rome*. If it should, yet doubtless it will be granted that our Saviour may compare with the best of them; and he (as we have heard before) frequently sent his Hearers to the Scriptures. And if we consult the An-

(n) Act. 17. 11.

(o) In cap. 3.
Epist. ad Rom.

cient Fathers, especially *St. Chrysostom*, (who was as diligent a Pastor as any the Church can now boast of) we shall find, that notwithstanding his abundant pains in teaching, he vehemently exhorted the People to read the Scriptures themselves, and enforc'd his Exhortation by many powerful Arguments. Omitting many others, I shall reciet one Passage in his 10th Homily, on the first Chapter of the Gospel of *St. John*; Before I proceed (saith he to his Hearers) to explain the words, I will ask one favour of you, which I beseech you not to deny me, for it is nothing burdensom, nothing hard to be done, which I ask, and much more profitable to you than to me. What is it then which I desire? That one Day in the Week, at least on Saturday, you take care to read that part of the Gospel which I am to explain to you, that every one take it into his Hands, repeat it often at Home, consider the Scope of it, mark what is clear, and what obscure, and what seems repugnant in it; and weighing all things beforehand, do you thus present your selves to hear. This will bring no small profit both to you and to me. For it will be no great labour to me, to make you understand the force of the Gospel, when you have before render'd it, as to the words at least, familiar to your selves at Home. And you will be not only more quick and ready to hear and learn, but also to teach others. There are many here present, who hear and endeavour to retain the words, and what I say upon them, who would receive no great benefit, tho I should spend a whole Year in preaching upon them. Why? Because by the bye, and only for a little time here, they apply their minds to them, &c.

I grant, It was Preaching, Teaching, and Instructing by word of Mouth, was the means appointed by Christ for planting his Gospel. But what then? doth it follow, that when the Gospel was written, it might not be read by

by the *Vulgar* ? No more doubtless, than that it might not be read by the *Learned* ; for that was the Means used for planting it among both. Nor can we well imagine, how it could at first be otherwise planted, because it was then to be confirm'd by Miracles. And suppose it were true, that *the Apostles who were thus commanded to preach, had never any Command to write* ; Is not this as good a Reason, why the Priests may not read the Gospel, as why the People may not ?

In the words following, the *Representer* sums up his Argument, *viz.* *Since then the Papists are taught and instructed in the Word of God, the very same way that Christ himself taught all those that followed him ; since they are instructed in it, the same way the Apostles themselves observed and commanded, by submitting to, and obeying those that are over them : Why do you say they are deprived of the Word of God ?* I answer. For these Reasons :

1. Because that which they have of the Word of God is but very little, in comparison of what they are deprived of.

2. Because much of that little, if taken with those glosses, and understood in that sense which they put upon it, is not the Word of God.

3. Because much of that little, which in popular Discourse is delivered to them as the Word of God, is nothing less. This the *Representer* must be forc'd to grant, unless he can prove these two things.

1. That both parts of a Contradiction may be true : For nothing is more obvious, than that those Propositions are, by many of the Roman Clergy, delivered as the Word of God, which are contradictory the one to the other. For Example : One says, the *Wood of the Cross* is to be adored ; another, that *Jesus Christ only* is to be adored in the presence of the Cross. That the Pope

has

has Power to depose Kings, one makes it Heresy to deny, another to affirm it.

2. That that may be the Word of God, which is plainly contrary to what God hath taught in the holy Scriptures; for so are many things taught by many of their Pastors: For example; *That the sacred Body of the Mother of Jesus is endow'd with a super-scraphical activity, whereby she can render her self present in a moment to all her Devotees; vieweth all their Actions, Words and Concerns, and can aid them at whatever distance at all times, whatever their Calamities be* &c. (p). When the Representer shall have proved these two Propositions: That Contradictions may be true, and that that may be the Word of God, that is plainly contrary to the Word of God, we may then perhaps be perswaded to believe, that the Roman Priests speak nothing but Oracles.

(p) *Contemplations on the Life and Glory of the Holy Mary.* p. 69.

S E C T. II.

That which is mentioned as the next *Misconstruction, Inference II.* or *false Inference* of the Protestants, is this: *That the Papist takes up all his Belief upon trust, he is led through all the Mysteries of his Religion by the hand, without seeing which way or whither he goes. All from beginning to end is Blindness and Ignorance, &c.* (q). And what says the Representer in answer to this? *A Papist believes as the Church of God (that is the present Church of Rome) teaches.* And does not he take all his Belief upon trust, who without examination, believes whatsoever his Church teaches? But how does he know what his Church teaches? his Priest tells him. Well, he believes as the *Church teaches*, he believes the Church teaches this or that, because his Priest tells him so; does he not then take his Church's Faith, and his own too, upon

(q) Chap. 71
p. 49.

on trust from his Priest? No: For he does not believe *blindly, but knowingly and understandingly, so far as the littleness of humane Reason, and his own Capacity will give him leave.* How does this appear? Because *in order to this, his Church has provided him of variety of Learned Books, explicating to him the sense of the Scriptures, as likewise the Articles of his Creed, every Mystery of his Religion, the ten Commandments, the Sacraments, and the whole Duty of a Christian, and this in such numbers, both in Latin and English, and other Languages, &c.* What? *Learned Books for the Unlearned?* and in *Latin* too, for those who understand not a word of *Latin*? May they not learn as much from the *Latin Bible*, as from a *Latin Explication*? Well may they believe *understandingly*, when their Church has provided them of such Books for that purpose, which are above their *Understanding.* But besides these, he has Books in *English, and other Languages.* In *England* he is better provided of Books, than in other Countries; But does he not take all these upon trust too, since he is not suffered to examine so much as one of them by the Scripture? Yea, is not his Belief of these Books, a plain Argument, that he believes *blindfold*? Because many such things are contain'd in them, which if he impartially examined, he could never yield his assent to. That I may not be thought to speak at random, I shall give a single Instance (out of that great number I could produce) in each of the Heads before-mentioned.

1. For the *sense of Scripture*; he must take it upon trust, who takes that Dominion ascribed to the *Blessed Virgin*, to be meant in these Texts quoted for it, *viz.* that God hath given her sovereign Dominion in Heaven over the Angels (*the Queen stood at thy right Hand, Psalm. 44.*) on Earth over Men (*Kings reign by me, &c. Prov. 18.*) and over Hell and the Devil; (*she shall bruise thy*
Head

Head Gen. 3.) (r) 2. For the *Articles of his Creed*: (r) Jesus, Ma-
 He believes upon trust, who believes Contradictions; ^{ria, Joseph. p.}
 and so does he, who believes, that by the *Catholick Church* 167, 168.
 in the *Creed*, is meant the *Roman Catholick*. 3. For
 the *Mysteries of his Religion*, I appeal to all Men, whe-
 ther he does not take them upon trust, who takes them, (s) *Contem-*
 as they are delivered in a Book lately printed (s); par- ^{plations on the}
 ticularly this of the Nativity of the Mother of *Jesus*: ^{Life and Glory}
 of the *Holy Mary*: ^{of the Holy Ma-}
 'That *Holy Mary*, being by a singular Priviledg, (in re-
 'gard of her Divine Maternity) perfectly innocent, ho-
 'ly, and full of Grace, Wisdom, and all Virtues, in the
 'first positive instant, of the Infusion of her Soul, she from
 'thenceforth ever exercised the sublime Operations of the
 'Contemplative and Unitive Life, without recourse to I-
 'mages of Imagination, or dependence on sense, by the
 'help of *abstractive Lights*, divinely infus'd, representing,
 '1. The several *Essences, Attributes and Motions* of the
 'whole Body of the Creation, in their several degrees and
 'stations. 2. The *Divinity* of God, with its manifold
 'Emanations, Operations, and unexplicable *Comprehen-*
 'sions. 3. And the *Humanity* of *Jesus*, with all the *Orders*
 'of Grace, *Mysteries* of Salvation, and *extatick Loves* of
 'the Saints, whereby her great Soul was so compleatly
 'actuated, even in the *Womb* of her Mother, that her
 'Contemplations, Sallies of Love, and Unions with God
 'were restless, ever increasing in their vigor, and still ex-
 'patriating through the vast Motions and Methods of *My-*
 'stical Love. Thus Divine *Mary* became still more accep-
 'table to God, replenish'd with Grace, and *absorpt* in the
 'Abyss of supernatural Perfection; which wonderfully
 'increased the *languishings* of Angels, Souls in *Limbo*,
 'and of her holy Parents for the hour of her *Birth* (t). (t) *Ibid. p.*
 This is a *Mystery*, (and so are several others in the same 44, 45.
 Book) which, I fear, the *Vulgar* are not able to believe

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know-

knowingly. 4. For the *ten Commandments*, he must believe *blindly*, who believes he has them intire in his Catechism, when so considerable a part is left out; *Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image, nor the Likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, &c.* Or that he hath the fourth Commandment sincerely delivered in these words; *Remember to sanctify the holy Days.* We are told I know, in the *Abridgment of Christian Doctrine*, that the Church cannot be *accused of the least shadow* of omitting any parts of the Commandments (u). But how can that be, when it is before acknowledged, that a great Part of the Text is omitted? *Because in no Catholick Bible, is there one Syllable left out.* But what is this to the Vulgar, who are not permitted to read any Catholick Bible? who know no more of the Commandments, than what they find in their Catechism. 5. As to the *Sacraments*. Had he not need trust strongly, who believes, that Christ instituted the Sacrament of Order, in saying, *Do this (w)*? Behold here the Lights the Vulgar Papist enjoys! Is it not now as manifest as Light it self, *That whosoever reproaches him with Blindness in the midst of so many Lights, may with as good Reason prove him to be in the dark, when Noon-day shines upon him.*

(u) Rhemes
Test. Annot. in
Luke 22. v. 19.
Abridgment of
Christ. Doct. p.
184, 185.

Especially considering, *That besides these Books, the Church hath given direction to all Parish-Priests, to explicate on Sundays and Holy-days, the Gospel, and some Mystery of the Faith, to such as are under their Charge, &c.* But have we not reason to believe, that the Explications of their Parish Priests are answerable to those we meet with in their Books? and then notwithstanding these *Helps and Assistances*, not only some, but many of his Church, may believe *without understanding*; who cannot be *condemned of Negligence and Sloth*, in the use of those means their Church has provided for them. And if

if the Parish-Priests are generally as ignorant, as many Learned Men of the Church of *Rome* tell us they are, even they themselves believe *without understanding*, and therefore much more the People.

But by what follows, the Vulgar-Papists are very blame-worthy, if they know not the Scripture better, than the Vulgar of any other Communion. For it is an unquestionable Truth, that when a Book contains high Mysteries of Religion, Mysteries superior to all Sense and Reason, and those not deliver'd in expressions suited to every Capacity, but obnoxious to various interpretations, that the People is in all probability likely to have more of the true sense of this Book, and to be better informed of the Truth of the Mysteries it contains, who are instructed in it by the Learned of that Communion, and taught it by their Pastors, Pre-lats, and those whom God hath placed over them, to govern and feed the Flock; than any other People, who have the Book put into their own hands, to read it, and search it, and satisfy themselves.

In answer to which I shall propose a few Questions to the Representer.

1st. Whether it be an unquestionable Truth, that when a Book contains not *only* high Mysteries, but such things as for the far greater part, are not above the Capacity of the Vulgar; that he shall have more of the true sense of this Book, who is instructed in it by his Pastors *only*, than he who is instructed in it by them, and studies it himself too? In all Sciences there are some Mysteries; now is he likely to understand any other Science better, who takes only the Instructions of his Teachers, than he, who together with them, diligently studies it himself also?

2. Suppose nothing but high Mysteries were contained in this Book; yet may not he as well understand these Mysteries, who is instructed in them by the Learned,

and searches them himself, as he that trusts only to the Instructions of the Learned?

3. Is it for the sake of these high Mysteries, that the reading of this Book is forbidden the Vulgar? If so, then,
 1. Why was it not forbidden sooner? since these Mysteries were in it from the Beginning. 2. Why are other Books publish'd for their use, in which are Mysteries superior to all *Sense and Reason, and those not deliver'd in expressions suited to every Capacity, but such as may be wrested by the Unlearned and Unstable to their own instruction?* Such I mean, as the *Contemplations of the Life and Glory, &c.* Jesus, Maria, Joseph, &c. And therefore,
 4. Is it not evident that it is not for the sake of the Mysteries, but of those things which are too plain and obvious to vulgar understandings, that the reading of this Book is prohibited?

But he confirms what he says, both by Reason and Scripture.

1. By Reason. *Are not the Pastors more capable of teaching the People, than the People are of teaching themselves?* An admirable Reason! Let us see how it will hold in other matters. Is not the Master or Tutor more capable of teaching the Scholar, than the Scholar is of teaching himself? He therefore will have more of the true sense of any Book in Logick, Physicks or Metaphysicks, that never looks into the Book himself, but only hears a Lecture once in a Week or Month from his Tutor, upon some part of it, than he that makes the Book his constant study.

2. As admirable are the Proofs from Scripture. *We know Moses gave the Book of the Law to the Levites to keep and read it every seven years to the People: And in King Jehoshaphat's Reign the Priests and Levites did read it, and teach the People; so did Jeremy by God's Command, so Isaiah, so Ezekiel.* — *And did not our Blessed Saviour*

take

take the Book of the Prophet, and read it, and expound it to the People? And was not this the Office of the Apostles and Deacons? &c.

The Argument is this. The Priests and Levites read the Book of the Law, and taught the People; so did *Jeremy, Isaiah* and *Ezekiel*; Yea our Saviour and his Apostles read and expounded the Scripture to the People: Therefore they will understand more of the true sense of the Scripture, who never read it, than those who do. What pity was it, that *Moses*, and the Prophets, and our Saviour and his Apostles, did not understand the force of this Argument? for if they had, they would, no doubt, have forbidden the People to read the Scripture, and then we had never been pester'd with those Sects and Heresies that spring from it: But they were altogether unacquainted with the *Roman* Politicks. Tho therefore they read the Scripture to the People themselves, and read it in the *vulgar Tongue*; yet they left it free to the People to read it, and not only so, but laid it as a Duty upon them.

He adds: For this intention was *Ananias* sent to *Saul*, *Peter* to *Cornelius*, and *Philip* to the Eunuch, who profess'd, he could not understand the Prophet in so necessary a Point as that of the *Messias*, without an Interpreter (x): None of which Instances make any thing for (x) P. 51. him, but that of the Eunuch makes much against him. For the Eunuch was reading the Prophet *Isaiah*, tho he could not understand him; and St. *Chrysostom* (y) and others (z) observe, that God as a Reward of his Diligence and Piety, in doing what he was able, sent him a Teacher. And what follows hence? First, that they ought

(y) Hom. 35. in Genes.

(z) Non intelligebat Scripturæ sensum homo prophanus & idiota; & tamen quoniam pio studio legebat, subito mittitur illi Philippus interpres, vertitur Eunuchus in virum, tingitur aqua, & ater Æthiops niveo agni immaculati velle induitur; subitoque ex mancipio prophane Regine, fit servus Iesu Christi. Eras. Epist. l. 29. Epist. 82.

not.

not to forbear the reading of the Scriptures, who do not understand them. Secondly, That they who thus read them with a pious Mind, shall be graciously accepted and rewarded by God. These Inferences are not mine, but both of them *St. Chrysostom's*.

It follows; *Since therefore the Papists, in delivering the Scriptures, come nearest to this method, commanded by God in the Old Law, prescribed and practised by Christ and his Apostles in the New, &c.* If he mean, that this was the only Method commanded by God in the Old Law, and prescribed by Christ in the New, I have already shew'd it to be false. If he mean that this was one Method, then how widely remote the Conclusion is from the Premises, will appear only by setting them together. One Method commanded by God in the Old Law, was, that the Priests and Levites should read the Law, and explain it to the People: the like Method was prescribed and practised by Christ and his Apostles in the New Law: Therefore the Papists, in withholding the Scripture from the Common People, come nearest to the Method commanded by God in the Old Law, and prescribed by Christ and his Apostles in the New. Where lies the Connection? And yet I confess it follows as clearly as

(a) *Ledefina
de Script. Di-
vinis quavis
lingua non le-
gendis. c. 5.*

this, That the Scriptures were not in the Vulgar Tongue, because *St. Paul* said to *Timothy*, *Thou hast learned the Holy Scriptures from a Child (a)*. I should have thought the quite contrary had followed, had I not been taught otherwise, by one that follows the guidance of the Infallible Church. Had the *Representer* spoken the whole Truth in the Premises, the Conclusion had been unavoidable for the Protestants, who in delivering the Scripture to the People, observe the same Method that God appointed under the Law, and Christ and his Apostles under the Gospel. What follows upon this Head, we have had before.

S E C T.

S E C T. III.

That which the *Representer* reckons as another *Mis-* *Inference 3.*
construction of the Protestants, is this; *That the Reason*
why the Vulgar Papists are not permitted to read the Bible,
is for fear lest they should discover the Errors of their Re- (g) Chap. 8.
ligion (g). 'Tis true, the Protestants assign this for P. 53.
 one Reason; but when he brings in the Protestant say-
 ing, *I can apprehend no other*, he misrepresents them, be-
 cause they assign others, tho they take this to be the
 chief. Now this, he says, is a *Misconstruction that lies so*
open, that there needs no more than a glimpse of Reason
to discover it. Let us therefore see, whether there be
 so much as a glimpse in those pretended Reasons he
 brings to confute it; which are these two.

1. *That tho the Vulgar and Unlearned of the Papists,*
have not in some Countries the Bible promiscuously
allow'd amongst them; yet that in those same Coun-
tries, and all others, there's no College, University,
Community, or place of Learning, but where the
Scriptures are publicly read and expounded (h). (h) Ibid.
2. *That there can be no ground for this Pretension, at*
least here in England, where the Bible in English, or
the Rhemes Testament, is to be found in most Ca-
tholic Families (i). (i) P. 54.
1. *That in all Popish Countries, there's no College, Uni-*
versity, Community, or place of Learning, but where the
Scripture is publicly read and expounded. Now if they
 (viz. the Protestants) should consider this, is it possible
 (says the Representer) for them to believe, that that Re-
 straint is upon the Vulgar, for fear they should see into the
 Follies of their Religion? It is possible: and because we
 see a Papist can believe contrary to Sense and Reason, I
 add,

add, that it is not only possible, but there is great Reason for Protestants to believe this. And that,

1. Because even Papists themselves believe it. So did the Bishops that met at *Bononia*, to consult about the establishment of the *Roman Church*: For having given it as their last and weightiest Advice, to *Julius III.* That he labour to the uttermost, that as little as may be of the Gospel, especially in the *Vulgar Tongue*, be read in the Cities that were under his Dominions, and that that little might suffice which is wont to be read in the Mass. They add, This in short is the Book which, besides others, hath raised those Tempests and Whirlwinds which we are almost carried away with: And the truth is, if any Man shall diligently consider this Book, and then view in order one after another, the things which are wont to be done in our Churches, he will see that there is a very great difference between them, and that this our Doctrine is altogether diverse from that, and oft-times even contrary to it; which as soon as Men understand, being stirred up by some Learned Men of our Adversaries, they never give over clamouring against us, till they have render'd us odious to all Men (k).

(k) Hic ille est liber, qui præter cæteros hæc no-

bis tempestates ac turbines concitavit, quibus prope abrepti sumus. Et sane si quis illum diligenter expendat, deinde quæ in nostris fieri Ecclesiis consueverunt, singula ordine contemplantur; videbit plurimum inter se dissidere, & hanc doctrinam nostram ab illa prorsus diversam esse, ac sæpe contrariam etiam: Quod simul atque homines intelligunt, à docto scilicet aliquo Adversariorum nostrorum stimulat, non ante clamandi in nos finem faciunt, donec re tandem pervulgata nos invisos omnibus reddiderint. Consil. de Rom. Ecclef. Stab.

Of the same Belief was *Peter Sutor*, as appears by these words; Since many things are deliver'd to be observed, which are not expressly in the Holy Scriptures; will not the Unlearned, observing these things, be ready to murmur, complaining that so great Burdens are laid upon them, by which their Gospel-Liberty is sorely abridged? And will they not be easily withdrawn from observing the

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Constitutions of the Church, when they shall see that they are not contain'd in the Law of Christ (l).

(l) Sed cum multa palam tradantur observanda, quæ

Sacris in literis expresse non habentur; nonne Idiotæ hæc animadvertentes facile murmura-
bunt, conquirentes cur tantæ sibi imponantur Sarcinæ, quibus & libertas Evangelica ita gra-
viter elevatur? Nonne & facile retrahentur ab observantia Institutionum Ecclesiasticarum,
quando eas in lege Christi animadverterint non contineri. De Translat. Bibl. c.22. Fo.96.

To which may be added all those (which make a vast number) who (as the Cardinal *Rodolpho Pio di Carpi*) believe, that if the Bible be in the Vulgar Tongue, all Men will become Hereticks (m). For who do they usually mean by Hereticks, but those who by reading the Bible, do first discover, and then renounce their Errors? Now tho, I confess, there are some things believed by Papists, which I think it impossible for a Protestant to believe; yet I doubt not but the *Representer* will grant, that the belief of this, is as easy to a Protestant as it is to a Papist: And that since it is believed by Papists, there is very good reason why Protestants should believe it.

(m) Soave's Hist. of the Conc. of Trent. l.5. p.460.

2. Since they allow the Vulgar the Ten Commandments in their own Tongue, what probable Reason can be given why they leave out this part, *Thou shalt not make to thy self any graven Image*, &c. but this; that they dare not let their Laity compare their Doctrine and their Practice, with this Scripture? It is, I know, commonly said, that this is done in compliance with the weak Memories of the People: But he must be of a weak understanding, who is satisfied with this Reason; especially considering, how tedious some of their Offices of Devotion are, which are composed for the use of the Laity.

Tho to stop their Adversaries Mouths, they now put these words into the English Catechisms.

3. It is no Thanks to them that the Bible is not denied to the Learned, because it is impossible it should

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be

be kept from them, as long as it is suffer'd in any Language. But it is plain they are afraid of them, in that they do not allow them, however *learned* and *pious*, but at the Bishop's discretion, to read any Versions of the Old Testament; Nor do they give the Bishop leave to permit any Man, how learned soever, to read any Versions of the New, made by those who are censured by their Church, but confine them to the Vulgar Edition (*n*). And to make as sure of them as they can, they tie them up as close as they are able, from giving any such Interpretation of it, as may be prejudicial to their new Faith. And yet not trusting to this Security, they endeavour, as much as may be, to conceal from them those Scriptures which are repugnant to their Doctrine. Which is,

(*n*) Reg. 3.
ind. Trid.

4. A plain Argument, That it is the Bible it self they take to be mischievous to them. Why else, 1. Did they blot those words out of the Margin and Index of *Rob. Stephen's Bible*, which were the same with those in the Text? For Example; *Abraham was justified by Faith. He that believeth in Christ, shall not die for ever.* They that blotted these out of the Index, that the Reader might not thereby be directed to find them, would they not (if they durst) have blotted them out of the Text too? 2. Why else have they purged, not only out of the Ancient Fathers, but many late Learned Writers of their own Church, many Passages of the Scripture it self? 3. Why was it commended as a most meritorious Act in *John Della Cava* Arch-bishop of *Benevento*, That *tho he had not openly and expressly condemn'd the Gospel, yet obscurely and covertly he had?* because in his large Catalogue of *Hereticks*, he had reprobated a great part of that Doctrine, which is contain'd in the Gospel; especially some certain Heads which were most opposite to the Church of Rome (*p*).

(*p*) Consil. de
Rom. Eccles.
Strab.

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The *Representer* proceeds; *If their Religion be so contrary to Scripture as you pretend, is it not more likely the Learned should make this discovery in their reading the Bible, than the Vulgar if they had the like liberty? &c.*

To which I return these two Things;

1. If the Learned are as free from Prejudice, Pride, Vain-glory, Covetousness, and other evil Affections, which darken Mens Minds, it is more likely they should make this Discovery than the Vulgar; if not, the Vulgar are better qualified to make it than they: For the Learning, when joyn'd with a sincere love of Truth, is a great advantage for the discovery of it; yet when destitute of this, it is as great a hinderance. The Learned among the Jews, in the days of our Saviour, are a demonstratiye Proof of this. Tho *Moses* and all the Prophets bore Testimony to him, yet the Scribes and Pharisees were not able to see it: Why? because they were prepossessed with the Prejudices of a Pompous Messias, they sought Glory of Men, they had carnal Affections, and a worldly Interest to serve; tho therefore all the Characters of the Messias were visible in him, yet because he was not a Messias for their turn, they could not discern them; I say, not only, they *did* not, but without first laying aside their corrupt Affections, they *could* not: And so our Saviour himself says; *He cannot hear my Word (q).* And *how can ye believe (q) Joh. 8. 43. which receive Honour one of another (r)? How wise and (r) Joh. 5. 44. prudent* soever they were in other Matters, they were not capable of the Truths of the Gospel; and therefore they were hid from them, while they were revealed to Babes (s). (s) *Mat. 11. 25.*

Now how few in comparison of the Learned in the Church of *Rome*, have not some carnal Interest to serve? How few are not prepossessed with some such false

Principle, that be the Scripture never so clear against them, will so blind their eyes, that they shall not be able to discern it? Should the Church of *Rome* teach Murder and Adultery to be Vertues, he who makes it a Fundamental Article of his Faith, that she cannot err, would not be able to see that they are Sins; but would find out some other sense of these Commandments than the words plainly import.

(t) Joh. 7.
48, 49.

In short; this Argument the Learned Jews made use of against our Blessed Saviour; *Have any of the Pharisees believed on him? But this People who know not the Law, are curs'd (t).* As much as to say; Were he the true Messias, the Learned Pharisees who study the Law, would certainly know it; since therefore they do not believe on him, no heed is to be given to the ignorant Multitude. Were therefore this Argument of force, it would have justified the Vulgar Jews in rejecting of Christ. But,

2. Many of their Learned Men have made this Discovery. How many such were the chief Instruments of the Reformation, and they doubtless discover'd the Errors of their Church, before they forsook it. How many continually since have forsaken their Communion, in spite of all worldly Motives to the contrary? How many who have not left their Communion, have given abundant Testimony by their Writings, that they were convinced of their Errors, some in one thing, some in another. Cardinal *Cajetan*, and Cardinal *Contarinius*, will be owned for as Learned Men as most of their Time; and they discover'd the Error of Prayer and Service in an Unknown Tongue. *Erasmus* in the last Age, and *Arnaud* and his Brethren the *Jansenists* in this, have expos'd to all the World the Error I now write against. The Learned Men of the Church of *Rome*,

Rome, who have rejected the *Apocryphal* Books from the Canon of Scripture, are too many to be particularly mentioned; for that they are no part of the Canon, was Catholic Doctrine at Rome it self (as a Learned Bishop of our own Church has prov'd) but ten Years before the Council of *Trent*. And whosoever has read the History of that Council, cannot but see, that the denial of the Cup to the Laity, was discovered to be an Error, by many Learned Men of that Church. Yea, the great Article of *Transubstantiation*, many of their most Learned Men, both in the present and in foregoing Ages, could never perswade themselves to believe. How many more of their Errors, have been discover'd, and published to the World by, *Cassander, Wicelius, Erasmus, Picus Mirandula*, and many other Learned Men, who died in Communion with them, I shall not stay to mention: But shall only make this Inference, that the *Representer* would never have argued at this rate, had he not vainly thought, that the Protestants are as little acquainted with the Writings of the Papists, as the Papists generally are with those of the Protestants.

What follows concerning *Mechanicks* and *Apron-strings*, the *Anvil*, the *Needle* and the *Ell*, I suppose he did not intend for Arguments, but only for Ornaments and Imbellishments, and therefore I pass them over.

He adds; *Is it probable, that every Man amongst the Papists, no sooner becomes Scholar, but he turns Atheist? No. That upon their search in the Bible, they plainly see all the Errours of their Religion, and yet are so bewitched as to go on boldly and jocosely to the Devil, without speaking a word, or moving a step to save their own Souls, or their Relations (u).* I will (u) P. 53, 54. not say, that every Learned Papist sees [all] the Errours of their Religion: It may suffice, that many of them

them have discover'd many of their Errors, & have writ-
ten boldly against them. And for those who discover their
Errors, and yet profess to believe them, it is not neces-
sary they should be *Atheists*: I hope those Gentlemen
are no *Atheists*, who for several years late past, have be-
lieved with the Church of *Rome*, and profess'd with the
Church of *England*, their Religion approves Equivoca-
tions, and mental Reservation: Tho I confess that ve-
ry Argument is so great a Bar to my turning Papist, that
I cannot at present imagine, that I can ever be reconcil-
ed to that Religion, which allows such gross Hypocri-
sies. I hope by this time the Representer sees, how *weak*
and *ill-grounded* his own Arguments are.

2. But he asks; *What ground can there be for this Pretension, at least here in England, where the Bible in English, or the Rhemes Testament is to be found in most Catholic Families?* If it be so, who is to be thanked for it? Not their Church-men: For tho they are more indulgent to their People here in *England*, yet it is be-
cause they dare not be otherwise, since should they hold
them to as strict terms here, as they do where they are
in full possession, it might endanger their losing them.
Besides, that it is impossible to keep the Bible here,
from those who have a mind to read it; for if they
have it not with their leave, they can have it without
it. But yet, to keep them as much as may be from it,
they endeavour to persuade them, that it is a sin to
read it without leave; and many are so possessed with
this Belief, that they acknowledg they dare not read it,
nor any other Book offer'd to them by Protestants, with-
out leave first obtain'd from their Ghostly Father: and
were *England* as much in their Power as *Spain* and *Italy*
are, a Bible in the Vulgar Tongue would be as rarely
found in any Family here, as it is in those Nations;
tho

tho I see no reason, but they may freely allow them the Rhemes Testament, because they have so transform'd it into their own likeness, that one would think, they need fear no danger from it.

But if, says he, *the prohibition of the Bible be, as you pretend in other Countries, for fear of the Vulgar discovering the Errors of their Religion; how comes it, that they don't make this Discovery here?* Some may not make this Discovery, because of those invincible Prejudices they are prepossess'd with: Others may not make it, because they do not see with their own Eyes, but leave it to their Priests to see for them: Yet 'tis strange the *Representer* should ask, *How comes it they do not make this Discovery?* as if none had made it; when, to the great grief of their Church, such vast numbers have long since made it. Does he not know, That one Objection against translating the Bible in in King *Hen. VIII* days, was, That if Lay-men had the Bible in their Mother Tongue, it would make them all Hereticks? Does he not know, how far the Event has answered the Prediction? that whereas before the whole Nation was generally of their Belief, so many have forsaken them since, that now perhaps one or two in an hundred, are as many as they can challenge?

He says, *Many have quitted that Communion upon other Motives, best known to themselves, but never any one could I meet with left them yet; by reading and following the Word of God.* He has it seems, met with few who have left them; nor could it be expected he should meet with many; for so many had left them before his time, that few in comparison remain'd to leave them now. And those who left their Communion in *K. Hen. VIII* days, could not leave it upon worldly Motives, because, after he gave leave to print the Bible in English, and
encou-

encouragement to all Men to read it, he not only continued a Member of the Church of Rome himself, but a zealous Persecutor of those who forsook it. But perhaps he *meets with none who desert them now* : If he does not, yet many others do ; and I presume, those that forsake them now, their only Motive must be, *to follow the Word of God.*

But if *the reading the Scriptures is such a defeat to Popery as you give out ; is it likely those who have been bred up to the reading of the Bible, and have made it their Study and Companion, should ever embrace that Communion ?* Not more unlikely, than that those who have been bred up to the reading of the Bible, should imbrace divers other Opinions and Practices, that are utterly inconsistent with it ; which we frequently see some Men do. Tho, I question not, but if he examine their Converts, he will find but few of them such as have made the Bible their *Study and Companion.* And for those who have been bred up to the reading it, but never concern'd themselves to consider it, it is not more unlikely, that they should imbrace Popery, tho never so plainly contrary to it, than that those should, who never so much as saw it. I shall not pass a Censure upon their late Profelytes ; but I am perswaded the *Representer* himself will confess, that some of them are such as they have no reason to boast of.

FINIS.

ERRATA.

Page 4. Marg. for *Mandement*, read *Mandement*. P. 8. Marg. for *Profanes*, r. *Profanes*. P. 11. l. 6. after *that*, add *it*. l. last, for *Acaia*, r. *Achaia*. P. 16. Marg. l. 4. for *it*, r. *et*. P. 19. Marg. for *si*, r. *se*. l. 2, and 3, for *evrai*, r. *evrai*. P. 30. after *reading*, add *it*. P. 53. l. 27. for *gossy*, r. *grossy*. P. 69. l. 7. for *reist*, r. *reist*. P. 80. Marg. r. *contempletur*.

